DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 385 265 IR 055 541

AUTHOR	Johnson, Debra Wilcox
TITLE	Evaluation of the Role of the State Library of Florida in Youth Services.
INSTITUTION	Florida Dept. of State, Tallahassee. Div. of Library and Information Services.; Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	65p.; For the executive summary, see IR 055 553.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Children; Library Planning; *Library Role; *Library Services; Program Evaluation; *Public Libraries; Users (Information); User Satisfaction (Information); Young Adults; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida State Library; Library Services and Construction Act

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes findings from the State Library of Florida's "Evaluation of Statewide Youth Services Program" project. The project was designed to assist the State Library of Florida in developing a long-range plan for youth services and to link the public library effort to "Blueprint 2000," the Florida education goals, and the federal Educate America Act: Goals 2000. In addition, the project provides a profile of the local public libraries' needs in youth services. There are five main sections. The first summarizes the findings about youth services needs and activities in local (Florida) libraries. Results from librarian and client (parents and caregivers, young adults, and children) focus groups are provided. The second section examines the role of the State Library in youth services. Focus group findings on the following roles are presented: FLYP (Florida Library Youth Program); training; young adults; collaboration; technology; consulting; leadership; management information; and communication. Questionnaire data is summarized for: satisfaction and importance ratings; use of State Library services; ways the State Library can help; and priorities for the State Library. The LSCA (Library Services and Construction Act) long-range plan is evaluated in the third section. The library's role in the state's "Blueprint 2000" is outlined in the fourth section; the library's goals discussed include: youths' readiness to start school; graduation rate and readiness for postsecondary education and employment; student performance; learning environment; school safety and environment; teachers and staff; and adult literacy. The fifth section includes nine recommendations to the State Library of Florida about its role in youth services and three recommendations related to the LSCA long-range plan. (MAS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 385 265

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Evaluation of the Role of the State Library of Florida in Youth Services

Prepared for the Florida Department of State Division of Library and Information Services

by Debby Tilton Johnson, Ph.D.
Johnson & Johnson Consulting

1995

Funded by
Library Services and Construction Act, Title I

IR 055541

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S.S. Whittle
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Evaluation of the Role of the State Library of Florida in Youth Services

Prepared for the Florida Department of State
Division of Library and Information Services

by Debra Wilcox Johnson, Ph.D.,
Johnson & Johnson Consulting

1995

The contents of this manual were developed
under a Library Services and Construction Act Grant
from the U.S. Department of Education
and administered by the State Library of Florida.
The contents do not necessarily represent the
policy of the U.S. Department of Education, however,
and you should not assume endorsement
by the Federal Government.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

Table of Contents

Introduction . . . . . *v*

1 **Youth Services in Florida Public Libraries** *1*

2 **The Role of the State Library in Youth Services** *23*

3 **The LSCA Plan for Library Service to Youth** *37*

4 **Public Library Youth Services and *Blueprint 2000*** *45*

5 **Recommendations to the State Library** *53*

Introduction

This report summarizes findings from the State Library of Florida's "Evaluation of Statewide Youth Services Program" project. The project is designed to assist the State Library of Florida in developing a long-range plan for youth services and to link the public library effort to *Blueprint 2000*, the Florida education goals, and the federal Educate America Act: Goals 2000. In addition, the project provides a profile of the local public libraries' needs in youth services.

This project was conducted from June 1 to September 30, 1994. Debra Wilcox Johnson, Johnson & Johnson Consulting, was the evaluator for this project. Dr. Johnson worked with State Library of Florida staff throughout the project and most directly with Carole Fiore, Library Program Specialist.

Data Sources

Several sources of data were used to evaluate the state's current role in public library youth services and to develop a profile of Florida youth services. These sources included focus groups, questionnaires, and State Library documents. Staff interviews provided additional insight to this entire report.

Focus Groups

The State Library of Florida sponsored six focus groups for public librarians, three in July and three in August. Interviews were held in Cocoa Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Ft. Myers, Tampa, Gainesville, and Tallahassee. A total of 64 librarians, representing youth services and administration, attended the six sessions. The participants were recruited by the State Library of Florida; local libraries hosted each of the interviews and provided note takers. In addition to the six librarian groups, one group of state-level agency staff met to discuss the role of the State Library in relation to other youth service efforts at the state level. This group met in Tallahassee in August.

Each group discussed items in four main areas: current local priorities in youth services, the effect of the State Library efforts on local practice, strengths of the current State Library efforts, and areas of development for the State Library of Florida in youth services. The latter three topics are discussed in the evaluation of State Library youth services section; the first topic is in the section on youth services in Florida libraries.

In addition to the librarian groups, five focus groups with library clients were conducted. These special interviews were conducted with one group of parents, two groups of young adults, one group of lower elementary school age children, and one group of upper elementary school age children. While the results from each group relate most specifically to the library hosting the interviews, the insights from

users provide an important perspective on the picture of youth services in Florida libraries. The results are not atypical of what has been reported nationally.

Questionnaires

To further help document current local youth services, to evaluate the effectiveness of the State Library of Florida efforts, and to help establish future priorities, the focus group results were supplemented with three sets of questionnaires. These were administered to all library directors, designated children's librarians for each library administrative unit, and a sample of branch youth services staff.

The questionnaires were mailed on July 12. A stamped envelope was included for direct return to the consultant. In mid-August, a telephone call was made to non-respondents by State Library of Florida staff. The final questionnaire was received September 25.

The response rate from library directors was 67.3% (76 responses from a pool of 113—vacancies account for the other three libraries). Of these, 12 library directors reported either no children's program or no opinion about youth services. The number of useable returns was 64.

The response rate from the children's coordinator for each system was similar. Of 113 libraries (3 had known vacancies in youth services positions), 80 questionnaires were returned (70.8%). Of these, 7 reported no activity or opinions. The number of useable returns was 73.

The response rate for the sample of library branches was 68.9% (51 of 74 libraries). Only one response was unusable; that person was too new to feel comfortable expressing her opinions. This was a systematic sample with a random start; the sampling ratio was one out of four.

In addition to the sample, the same questionnaire was sent to known young adult librarians in the state. Sixteen useable questionnaires were returned. The results from these surveys parallel the findings in the other three surveys; detailed summary of this set is not reported since no significant differences were found.

Report

This final report is organized into five main sections. The first summarizes the findings about youth services needs and activities in local libraries. The second major summary examines the role of the State Library in youth services. The LSCA long-range plan is evaluated in the third section. The library's role in the state's *Blueprint 2000* is outlined in the next section. The final section includes the recommendations to the State Library of Florida about their role in youth services. An executive summary of this full report has been published separately as a companion piece.

Chapter 1
Youth Services in Florida Public Libraries

One of the purposes of this evaluation project was to supply a picture of current needs in public library youth services. This "snapshot" documents Florida's interest in and delivery of youth services. These results supplement the Terrie and Summers report, which illuminates the public library's role as an educational agency (E. Walter Terrie and F. William Summers, *Libraries Improve Florida's Education*, State Library of Florida, 1987). In relation to the State Library, the profile of youth services in public libraries helps to shape the state's role in youth services in light of the needs expressed in the focus groups and questionnaires.

Information used to create this picture comes from each of the three questionnaires, the focus groups with librarians, and five special focus groups with library clients. The insights from users provides an important perspective to be considered in evaluating local library services. The success of these special focus groups provide, at a minimum, evidence of the usefulness of this technique for local library needs assessment and evaluation.

Librarian Focus Groups

Librarians were asked early in the interviews to identify local priorities. Given that libraries have locally-determined long-range plans and selected roles, it was expected that priorities would vary. Traditional emphases on children's programming and collection improvement were balanced with attention to outreach services and trying to reach young adults. Support issues such as staffing and cooperative activities were also highlighted by participants.

Children's programming is a basic local priority. Storytelling was seen as an important alternative for youth, although it "can't compete with videos and such." Clearly, librarians "like booktalking" and "encouraging kids to ask about books." There was some concern that more sharing of program ideas and outlines was not done regularly. "We need cost effective children's programs that can be packaged and shared among librarians." One system reported an annually sharing among the youth services librarians of "programming boxes" that each one was responsible for developing. Others reported use of these types of boxes, especially by daycare centers. Year-round programming was reported by several of the librarians, as was success in programming in the summer at parks and recreation centers. Staff time to keep up active programming is a related worry, however, as was "maintaining the quality of programming."

In the collections area, libraries explained that a local priority was "good collections in all facilities." One library noted that "our main priority is getting things that the kids want to read and can

read." Collections are used heavily by school teachers and child care providers. "Local teachers will come in and check out 40 or 50 books at a time," and libraries "spend a great deal of time with teachers, getting books ready for them to pick up." This heavy use of the collections and programs was related especially to private schools that may lack adequate school library resources. Public libraries were variously described as a "surrogate" and a "supplement" for school libraries. Some libraries offer collections to daycares and Head Start centers.

Expanding programming through outreach was identified as a current priority by some of the librarians. Programming, including storytelling, for daycare providers was the most frequently mentioned outreach service, meeting "with a lot of success." Presentations to school classes also was an important outreach activity, but the getting to each school was a staffing problem. Some libraries are developing videotapes for use with school classes on library services and of booktalks. Other outreach priorities included reaching inner city children, Even Start, focusing on rural poor areas, and family literacy. Use of volunteers to assist in outreach also was recounted.

A few of the participants reported active young adult (YA) services, including "informed readers advisory, a broad YA collection," and "a separate young adult section." Another shared that they were building an addition that would include a section for YAs, and some reported renewed attention to this client group. Use of young adults in volunteer programs also received positive comments. Others raised the issue of "where does YA fit into the library? As a children's librarian, I am busy doing programming for children, and adult services librarians do not have the time either . . . There is no designated place for young adults." Another concluded that "a children's librarian is not a YA librarian.".

Staffing was an important local priority. The library staffing situation was described as "in a holding pattern for years" and "maintaining the status quo." Some libraries mentioned establishing a YA program as a local priority, but others concluded that "we are still trying to stay fully staffed with children's librarians" and "there is not enough personnel to have effective YA programs." Some reported an erosion of services in children's. "We had one of the best children's programs that I had ever seen, and we did a lot of staff outreach. Now, we do not do much of this anymore." "We are not really reaching the volume of children that we could be reaching." Frequently, it was explained that "since we are all strapped for money, the push is for children's librarians in our budgets rather than YA staff." LSCA grants have been used to hire young adult staff, "but once the grant was not renewed, we lost the position." Others described efforts to add YA staff, but the positions were "never formally established."

In addition to providing better services and collections, local libraries are "establishing good community contacts." "Involving the community—seniors, former teachers, and older students—can help" the library in meeting service needs. "I get a kick out of meeting people in the street who talk about the library" shares one rural librarian. Equally important are the

"liaisons with outside agencies." These relationships "can be a solution to alleviate the shortage of materials and services."

Underlying all the discussion about library services was a great concern for youth and what the future would hold. Teenage pregnancy, crime, violence, suicide, and drugs were often mentioned as problems. The state agency staff group expressed these and other concerns for youth in Florida. About one-quarter of all children under six live in poverty, poor quality daycare exists, and families are information poor. Multicultural issues are present throughout the state, not just in isolated areas. In all groups, young adults in particular were seen as needy. "Young adults are becoming younger." They seem like "a lost group."

Participants raised questions about the library's role: "How can libraries help?" and "What can we do to face these issues with our resources." Community partnerships seemed to be one of the answers to this question. "It's important to work with . . . high schools, teen pregnancy support groups, and community organizations . . . You can be aware of what alternatives are available, and you can better serve your patrons." The library could help with alternative activities for these youth. One person remarked that "the local board of county commissioners had asked her library to do after school activities for children due to the rising crime rates."

Interwoven with the discussion of local priorities was the identification of local needs in serving children and young adults. While unique local needs were raised, a pattern emerged from most of the responses. These include the following:

- Concern about the effect of year-round schooling, especially on programming.
- The role of the public library as the school library for home schoolers.
- The difficulty of reaching the young adult population.
- Continuing need for better relationships between schools and other community agencies and the public library.
- The demand for outreach services and the need to balance these in relation to those delivered at the library.
- The urgency in youth services to get on the information highway.
- The necessity of programming for older elementary school aged children.
- The value of better recruitment and training of staff.

While year-round schools are not in the majority, participants expressed concern about the effect of year-round schooling, especially on programming. According to one librarian, Florida ranks third in the nation in the number of year-round schools. "There is not one aspect of children's services that has not been affected by year-round schools. It is making a big impact." The impact was not necessarily negative. As one librarian said, "We kill ourselves for the summer; once year-round schools are introduced, we won't have to do this anymore." Others noted that even with year-round school, the amount of total vacation time is the same as in the traditional school year, just distributed differently. Some did not notice a difference in library use in year-round school communities.

An increasing role of the public library

in Florida is as the school library for home schoolers. As with year round schooling, Florida ranks highly on the number of homeschoolers. "We are performing an enrichment, instructional, and social interaction resource for homeschoolers." "We are providing a huge reference source." In all groups there was agreement that the public library has become a school library for this population. Concerns were voiced about the difficulty of getting materials from some of the homeschooling bibliographies, with many of the items out of print. "Homeschoolers have a greater need for different materials to make up for or enhance their home curricula than do public and private school children." One librarian felt "we cannot meet the demands, no matter how hard the library tries." Homeschoolers, though, "can become a real asset" and public library supporters.

Across all the focus groups (including the user groups), the difficulty of reaching the young adult population and the need to do it were important themes. "The commitment to young adult services seems to be diminishing." When asked about local needs, participants noted that "we have a good children's program, but no YA program." "Children are usually well served, but teens are almost ignored." "Teenagers are seen as difficult to deal with and serve." Some explained the value of convincing others that the library has a role in serving young adults. "We need to convince legislators that one way to keep at-risk youth off the streets would be to provide library programs and collections that interest young adults." "The encouragement for YA librarian positions must come from a higher level—state or federal." As noted earlier in this discussion, the librarians do strongly perceive the need for more directed service to this age group, but lack the appropriate staffing to work with this clientele.

The nature of the services to young adults was discussed. Volunteer programs for young adults are available in some libraries, but was described as "labor intensive." Yet the "teens' input inspires more ideas." Some participants suggested a move away from programming for this age group. Rather, "the young adult age group is more interested in materials to do well in school." "Academic programs and skills—this is where we should be focusing our attention in regards to young adults." Others reported an increase in use by teens when the collection improved. "No one between the ages of 9 and 17 came . . . when we got materials, the kids came." As a group, though, young adults are difficult to reach, especially "after 13 . . . they do not feel there is much the library can do [for them]."

There was a concern, however, that libraries cannot replace school libraries. "Public libraries need to look at their missions again, if this is what YA users are looking for."

There is a continuing need for better relationships between schools and the public library. Cooperation between schools and libraries was seen as essential in this area. "Libraries and schools are a community venture . . . a joint learning cooperative." A value was placed on cooperating with other agencies. One librarian told of her efforts to develop programming in a rural area. "I couldn't compete with the schools and churches. Now I provide services in

conjunction with these agencies . . . and have created a niche" for the library.

Serving private schools makes demands on public library resources, as does reduced staffing and funding for public school libraries. There was apprehension over the reduction of school library services in some areas, since this passed the burden onto the local public library without the funds. A decreasing emphasis on school libraries in some districts also is a concern at the state level.

The demand for outreach services and the need to place these in relation to those delivered at the library show the balance libraries are trying to achieve. "We have many programs in the library, but wish we had more outreach." Without outreach, libraries were depicted as "just preaching to the choir." Daycares are the most widely served, but just as with schools, the numbers are increasing. "The [public] libraries are the only resource for daycare centers." One librarian wanted to "go into the neighborhoods to train community volunteers" to assist with outreach. Others reported offering special workshops for volunteers to work with daycare providers and creating "community outreach teams."

Deciding which groups are in the most need allows libraries with "limited resources to focus on the greatest needs first" in outreach. Others defined outreach very broadly, as "a valuable service for those families that find time to get to the library a problem, especially for single parent families." "With parents working, it is difficult for kids to visit the library." "Societal changes are impacting libraries . . . perhaps libraries need to structure more non-traditional programs and services." In rural areas, transportation to the libraries is a problem, so "kids are considered disadvantaged because they are isolated." Even in urban or suburban areas, most children depend on adults to transport them to the library.

There was an urgency in the discussions about technology to "get youth services on the information highway." One librarian characterized his library as "on the information dirt road." This image struck a chord for many librarians serving youth. "We want to target youth with technology . . . We want them to know they can come to the library for more than just summer reading program and story time." Librarians are having difficulty identifying and funding appropriate technology. "Technology is something we haven't even been able to approach at our branch." Some staff "are sometimes resistant to try new things and move forward with technology," yet "we need to be focusing on technology." It is, for many of the libraries, "a balance between the demands for technology and our resources . . . it is finding the best thing we can do for each group." Of concern for all the focus groups were youth and families depicted as "information poor," lacking "access to the information super highway."

The necessity of programming for older elementary school aged children emerged as a concern and was linked to the Florida Library Youth Program (FLYP) manual as well (see state's role section). Public libraries were urged to "communicate where we are" and "reassess" service priorities. "We spend a lot of time programming for 3- to 5-year- olds . . . spending all this personnel time on an

exclusive group of users." "The difficulty of trying to provide programs for different age groups at different locations" is a challenge. Another concluded: "Once a child reaches age 10, she not longer wants to do `baby stuff' anymore." "The upper elementary kids think they are too old to go to library programs." One library reported success with a book discussion group for ages 9 to 11.

The issues of better recruitment and training of staff permeated the focus groups. This covered several issues. One was the difficulty of recruiting "good people in youth services." This included recruiting "minority and multilingual librarians." Children's and young adult librarians were seen as being a special type, having "performance skills and [being] enthusiastic." Another described the situation as one with "a multitude of job placements, so it is often difficult to get the best applicants to work at a public library." The "different pay scales from public libraries and school media centers" combined with different schedules made recruiting for the public library over the school library difficult.

The second staffing-related issue revolved around graduate library education. Library schools were urged to strike a balance between educating in technology and youth programming and collections. "We should not direct library education into technology so much that we lose sight of the human side—that people want to be able to go to the library and read a good book."

Yet, there is a definite need for "librarians to be trained for the future" with a good knowledge base in technology. More than one librarian described recent job interviews where "questions about technology for youth yielded abysmal results." New librarians were seen as unprepared in technology.

The need to train existing staff received the most attention of any of the staffing issues. This topic is detailed in the next chapter on the role of the State Library.

Client Focus Groups

Gathering the user perspective on library services and needs resulted in five focus groups. While one should be cautious about overgeneralizing the results of these groups, the comments provide interesting insights into the concerns of library users and most often parallel concerns raised by the library community.

Parents and Caregivers

One group of parents and other caregivers was interviewed. Their concerns seemed to reflect those of the librarians in the other focus groups: the need to expose children to reading and storytelling, encouraging parents to read to their children and bring them to the library, skills of library staff, quality collections, and problems facing young adults.

The prevailing theme in the interview was encouraging reading. The parents and other caregivers were concerned about the technology focus in recreation, such as video games. They felt that exposure to alternatives, especially reading, is critical. "We have to show them how much fun there is in reading; they can then be exposed to new things." "Once children are shown the way, they get interested." Given all the books the library has to offer, the library needs to "show children how

wonderful they are." "Children must be challenged to taste new things."

Part of this "exposure to reading" element in libraries is linked to storytelling. One person commented, "Children like to hear stories to introduce them to books. They'll associate hearing stories eventually with reading stories." A link was made between the quality of programming and training of librarians. Participants noted a need for flexibility to accommodate children's interests at the library and that students of all ages needed to be welcomed by the library staff, individually or in classes.

There was a concern for parents who did not have the time or skills "to answer questions and open doors for children." It was felt that parents need education about the library and the importance of reading to their children. While the working parent has less time for reading to children, equally "we have stay at home parents, but they are not reading to their kids."

Some concerns were raised about the collections in the libraries. This translated into a problem of variability across libraries — some were very good, others bad. The public library was perceived as not keeping up with the schools in the technology area, especially with computer databases specifically for youth. The attitude of the librarian was tied to how the collection was promoted and displayed. "Children's books need to be highlighted like best sellers for adults." Of particular distress were children's librarians who have an attitude of "don't touch the shelves." "Kids pick up on this . . . We are scaring kids away by saying don't touch the book." Overall, the library needs to be more "consistently user friendly" for youth in both collections and personnel. Improved training for library staff in youth services was highlighted by the participants.

Young adolescents (especially 11 to 15) seem to be left out in the entire community. Participants felt the library needs to be a partner in the community-wide effort to provide activities and space to reach this hard-to-reach group. "We should use the library's resources to get them off the streets." Of particular concern for this age group was the likelihood that they were home alone. "Someone used to be home to direct children. Now children don't have this. The schools and the rec centers cannot do it all." Young adults were described as "under-represented" and "underserved." To help meet both the needs of the younger children and young adults, tutoring in the libraries was suggested. Adult and young adult volunteers could contribute to this tutoring effort. Overall, promoting voluntarism in the library was encouraged for young adults along with seniors to work with youth.

Time to take the children to the library was another concern, linked to the increasing number of working parents. This was translated by participants into a need to take the library out to the community. One participant concluded: "We must go out to them." Out of this discussion emerged the need for closer school and public library cooperation to help reach out to youth in the community. "Teachers and librarians need to collaborate."

While the responses in this interview are likely influenced by the local situation, these concerns are generally replayed by librarians in the focus groups and

questionnaires. Exposure to and encouraging reading is a basic function of youth services in libraries, and outreach, improved collections, staff training, and the needs of young adults all represent key issues for local libraries and the State Library of Florida.

Young Adults

Two groups of young adults were interviewed, representing the middle and high school grades. These young people clearly expressed a desire to be heard and a desire to be served by public libraries. As was the case with the younger children, these students were library users (or at least aware of the public library) with diverse interests. Interest in learning and expression in the arts were characteristic of these young adults. Overall, they described their communities —including libraries —as having ignored the needs of young adults. On the plus side, the participants seemed to appreciate that the library was taking the time to listen to their concerns through these interviews.

The participants described the library as a place to go in communities where things to do were limited (these were both urban areas). A healthy dose of reality was present in both groups. "These are great suggestions, but where is the money going to come from? Elected officials don't represent us." Another said that "the whole thing centers around adults and taxpayers not being interested in kids." They felt that the problems youth were having was "because there is nothing for kids . . . they don't care about kids."

The young adults were desperately seeking a place to go that was "safe," where they "felt comfortable and welcome," and "where mutual trust was found." This concern for safety is equally strong in Florida's *Blueprint 2000*. These ideas come out of their strong sense of feeling unwelcome in the community, being "prejudged," their concerns over safety, and a desire to express themselves. Several mentioned the stress they feel related to these issues, home life, and trying to succeed in school. One student talked about what happens when there was a safe place to go: "When you go to a physical space sometimes you get mental space with it." All the teens stated a desire for their "own space" in the library; their "opinions should be considered when the space is being planned." A truly separate room would allow for tolerance when they sometimes get noisy, involvement in decorating the space, and a place to listen to audio materials (individually or by groups during a program).

There was a strong interest in the library having a collection that met their needs, both for recreational reading and help with school work. For the majority of the interview participants, improvement of the YA collection was a top priority. The students had difficulty describing exactly what would make a "good reading collection," although books about life's problems and "exciting stories" were cited frequently. Many bought books, but said this was not the solution to meet their reading needs—"too expensive" or "hard to find." Paperbacks were a desired format. Many of the teens also sought materials in the adult collection to meet their reading needs, but were "worried about the slow readers. They need to know there are books

An improved music collection was an important theme. In general, this desire parallels the YAs interest in more programming and materials on the arts. "Music is an important part of life and expression for teens."

It was particularly crucial that this collection be developed with input from young adults. The current music selection was described as "crummy" and "seldom on the cutting edge." Local bands also needed to be better represented.

Input into the selection of materials was strongly recommended. "We need a way to be heard" and "a say in what books and magazines are purchased" were statements that specifically addressed this issue. As one teen put it, "We have to hope that our ideas will be heard."

For homework and independent learning, the collections were praised as being better than those in the school libraries (and more accessible), but criticized for lacking depth and currency in the nonfiction area. "Technical reference materials are extremely out-of-date, especially for computers. Advanced magazines in this area are hard to find."

One poignant story came from a young woman who followed the advice from an out-of-date book in the collection. Her hamster died because of the feeding instructions in the book.

Having enough materials to meet the demand for school papers was raised in both groups. Some participants reported that this was the only time when their friends came to the public library. Both groups also rated the school libraries poorly, because of collections or accessibility. Three key gaps in collections were identified: college and career information, arts and music, and multicultural materials.

All of the students were very "technologically aware." They appreciated the online catalog, but generally felt that electronic reference sources to meet their needs were virtually non-existent and not a top priority in the library. YAs "need access to information to do their best." This could mean "help in learning how to do an online search or assisting them in searching the materials available in the library." Programs on library tools were recommended. Computers available for multiple uses were widely recommended, since use of the school computers was closely linked to classroom activities only. Word processing and other interactive software was requested along with more open access to them.

The young adults interviewed placed a strong emphasis on programming to attract young adults to the library, fill the "need for something to do," and help those "wanting to belong." Participants suggested appealing to a broad range of young adults, "taking all interest levels into account, intellectual, cultural, and fun." One teen noted that "things that are fun motivate people who aren't readers to come in." Peer tutoring groups for teens was recommended, "especially for teens struggling with English as a new language." The perception was that "most libraries offer programs for little kids but not for teens."

Some of the programs suggested included those with an environmental theme, sports-oriented, stress management for teens, and Olympics for the mind

(mental rather than sports). Information on grants and scholarships had appeal to those interested in further education. A multicultural focus for programming was urged as "a positive move . . . it brings the community together."

There seemed to be limited cultural, arts, and performances targeted for teens in the community, and the library was seen as a logical source for such programming. In this category, specific programs suggested were writers and poetry groups, "open mike for aspiring authors to read their works," music programs (retrospective and current), film festivals, and young adult performers (e.g., children's theater). The library should "support and encourage performance and programming by teens."

The library staff got mixed reviews. Some said the staff were welcoming, "treated us like everyone else," or "normally, really nice." Others described the problem of not being greeted or recognized by the staff. When asked if the staff was negative, one participant noted, "No. They just are not there." Designated YA staff was a strong suggestions by the teens. That staff person becomes a liaison, "channel for input," and "a person who listens." The YAs could have "a representative librarian that gets out and reaches people." The idea is to establish "a visible program," with "a personal touch," including calls, outreach, and class visits.

The image of the library for young adults is not a good one. The participants said their friends would describe it as "dull" or "boring." "People don't like to go to the library because they think you have to," concluded one young man. "It has to be important to teens and useful and interesting." Once improvements in collections were made, getting the word out should attract teens. Most were realistic in the problems of recruiting teens, however. The groups realized that they now came to the library because they had come to the public library as children and that some "people just can't be reached."

Specific marketing suggestions included interesting programming "that meets their needs," television and radio advertisements, and reaching YAs through the schools. Using teens along with library staff talk to other teens was encouraged by both groups. "Have a person our age come to our class and tell us about the library." "It has to be someone our own age . . . we'd listen better." "Teen-to-teen contact" was recommended, as was outreach to teen groups. Surveys through school classes and a YA comment or suggestion box were described as ways to elicit information from teens. If opinions are solicited, however, it needs to be "with the assurance it will be read . . . let us know!"

Involving young adults as volunteers was seen by all as a way to increase library use by teens. Also, participants noted that their schools were starting to incorporate community services into classes, and voluntarism was good for college entrance. Once a good teen volunteer program gets started, young adults learn that "people are friendly," and there is a "good feeling being here with so many other teens." One of the groups represented a teen advisory board, so strong support was evidenced for that concept in libraries. The other group also expressed support for that concept, especially if it provided them a "voice" in the public library.

In summary, a number of issues were raised by the young adults. Among the most prevalent were the following.

- The need to have a "place to go" that is safe, welcoming, and trusting.
- Library collections for recreational use lacked an adequate range of materials to meet the diverse interests of young adults; music was mentioned specifically.
- While seen as better than school library collections, there was deep concern over the depth, currency, and quality of the collection that supports teens' school and independent learning needs.
- Improvement of the young adult collection was a top priority for both groups.
- Access to computers and information in electronic forms was a high priority in both groups.
- Programming needed to be expanded and more meaningful for young adults; a broad list of topics was suggested, including those in the performing and literary arts.
- Library staff overall received mixed reviews, although there was consensus on the need for a designated young adult librarian "that gets out and reaches people."
- The image of the public library is not a good one with teens.
- Active publicity efforts are needed to reach the young adults; peer promotion and spreading information via the schools were two key suggestions.
- Young adults voluntarism was encouraged, as was a teen advisory committee for the library.

Children

Two groups of children were interviewed. One represented children going into second and third grades. The other group represented the upper elementary. These insights allowed the children an unusual opportunity to express themselves about the library, and express themselves they did! For all ages, participants openly offered ideas and opinions. In addition, all drew pictures about their views of what a library can be in the future.

Participants in the two groups revealed a wide range of interests and clearly were readers and library users. In this way they, of course, did not reflect all of the children in a given community. With that caveat in mind, however, the children provided an interesting snapshot of the public library. The results potentially confirm impressionistic information gathered by local librarians.

Finding, reading, and checking out books topped the list of reasons why the children came to the library. With diverse reading interests, they looked for all genres; some reported seeking "anything," "whatever books I haven't read," "hard to find books," and "stuff you can't buy anywhere." A high level of reading was reported. One child said she was proud because "I have my own library card."

One thing the children did not like was when they could not find anything new at the library; this happened "sometimes." One child reported that "I take my favorites then and re-read them." Another stated that "sometimes I have to really search for what I want." One participant combined both concepts: "When I cannot find the book I

want, I usually pick another books or ask someone to look on the computer for another copy." One child missed the card catalog because sometimes "you come across books you did not know of." Others, though, like the computer catalog, "because it shows us where the books are," it is "faster," and "it tells when it is checked out."

Besides checking out books, children recounted receiving "things to keep," such as bookmarks, posters, pencils, and food. They liked the fact that "they just get them" rather than have to do something for a reward. One young man reported attending a fun party for having read 30 books. When queried about if he would have read the 30 books without the party, he replied, "Yes!"

Most of these children linked use of the library with recreation, first for reading (in the library and checking books out) and then second for programs. Several liked the "librarian reading stories." Others cited the summer reading activities, movies, and special programs, such as one on pets. Some of the older children volunteered in the library.

Although not named by the children as "looking for information," the children did use the library as an information source, both for individual interests and school work. One aspiring writer liked to "learn what others think when writing." Especially for the younger children, books on animals, including pets, and science were popular. For school assignments the children sought material on states, history, planets, and animals.

While visiting the library, the children all reported liking to read while at the library. "It is so quiet and you can read," reported one person with younger siblings at home. In addition, viewing displays, looking at pictures, listening to books on tape, and participating in arts and crafts were activities liked by the children in the library. The older children particularly noted the use of non-print formats, such as videos, computers, CD's, and cassettes.

When asked about the people who work at the library, the favorite word among the children was "nice." Others comments included: "they help you" and "they are patient when you cannot find books." One child did not like it when the people were "mean because they were busy." The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

All the children used their school libraries. They reported them as being "different." This translated into being smaller than the public library, having card catalogs, "not having as interesting of books," and having CD-ROMs.

There were things the children did not like about the library, although these were limited. As noted earlier in this section, they did not like it when they could not find the books they wanted. A desire for more books was clearly evident. "I would put more shelves in so we could have more books." "Buy more children's books than adult books." One child summed it up nicely: "I would build bigger, taller libraries because you could have more books."

Some reported it hard to find things; the younger children wanted to know why all the books were not in alphabetical order. When queried further about this, they said some of their favorite authors had books in different sections (e.g., mysteries, etc.); they were not shelved in the same place.

They did not like it when the librarian told them the book they found in the catalog was at another library or "not there when the computer said it was."

Among the older children, there was a feeling that the "little kids" were too disruptive. "Couldn't the kids room be split by ages." It was hard to do homework when the younger kids were there. Other changes in the facility mentioned were: more displays and display areas and listening stations. The drawings of the future library all represented changes in facilities (see the last part of this section.)

Another desire was for artwork in the library by children. "Kids could make paintings and hang them up in the library, and the librarian could put your name on your painting." Another said "kids could make a mural and hang it up in the library." One improvement mentioned really related to parents, not the library: "I hate it when my mom comes to the library just to return books without giving us time to check out more books."

All the children were asked to draw pictures of what they would like the library to be like. They then were asked to explain their drawings. Making more space for books and arranging them easily (e.g., by color or "putting books with the first letter being the same in the same section" [F]). One younger child suggested a castle. "This would make the library fancy, and we can have lots more stuff" [A]. Some of the older children redesigned the library so the children's room would be the first floor (and the biggest space) [B, E]. Likewise, spaces for activities such as listening to tapes and watching videos were drawn.

When explaining the drawings, one East Indian child would like more books about her culture and another wanted faster ways to check out books. The summer heat clearly had a role in the children's drawing. One wanted waterproof books for reading under water. Several suggested pools, and one thought of "personal floats for reading on in the pool."

The wonders of technology were clearly illustrated in the drawings. The most distinct images included combining computers with information and three dimensional figures, such as a computer describing the actual skeleton hanging in the library [H], or recorded information coming from statues of animals. These statues would also have "books that tell about the animal in the animal's mouths" [G]. Another suggested that a computer request would result in "the book being found by a library person and sent down a chute or on a conveyor belt back to the child" [C]. A robot to carry out the same task was suggested by another child in that group. The information seeking process was visualized by another as combining computer technology and holograms. In this case, the child would type in the information desired (in this case on boxer dogs) and a picture would be projected of the dog as the computer verbally reported about that animal [D].

The interviews with the children reveal a positive view of the public library among active readers and library users. The use of the library, however, was closely tied to the ability of parents to transport and/or accompany children to the library. The children clearly distinguished the public library from school libraries (in a positive way) and appreciated the public library for

its collection, programs, and personnel. As an evaluation and needs assessment strategy, local libraries will find the group interview an effective way to gather information directly from the young clients they serve. In summary, the key themes that emerged were:

- Finding, reading, and checking out books topped the list of reasons why children came to the library.
- All reported sometimes being disappointed that they could not find materials in the collection; all wanted more books to choose from (and therefore larger children's areas).
- Incentives were appreciated by the children, though not instrumental in their decision to read or come to the library.
- Programs were cited as fun and interesting.
- The children used the library for information to support both their school work and independent interests.
- Staff received high marks, most often being described as "nice."
- Among these school-aged children a distinction was made between them and the "little kids" who were often disruptive; a desire for separate space was expressed.
- Children envisioned a future library where computers allowed books to be delivered with speed and provided audio information supported by holograms.
- The use of the library by children is clearly tied to the ability of parents and other caregivers to transport and/or accompany children to the library.

Questionnaires

Data were gathered from each of the three questionnaires regarding the status of youth services in Florida public libraries. The director, children's coordinator, and sample library surveys all asked about the needs of the library in serving children and young adults. In addition, each library system was queried about collaboration, staffing, expenditures for youth services materials, collection size, registered borrowers, use of output measures, and library policies toward youth. The response rates are reported in the earlier discussion in the first section of the report.

Critical Needs in Serving Children

Staffing and collections head the list of critical needs facing libraries in services to children. The directors and sample respondents listed staff as their top priority (33, n=63 and 25, n=45 respectively). A total of 35 children's librarians (n=69) made staff the second highest need in that category. Enhanced collections ranked first with children's librarians (38), and second for directors (28) and sample respondents (15).

Directors also identified the need for more space (17), with 8 additional citing space for programming specifically. Funds in general received 13 mentions, and recruiting and maintaining qualified youth services staff receiving 12. More and varied programming, training for staff, reaching nonusers, and new technology also ranked as important needs.

Children's librarians listed space needs as a concern (17) and gave attention to outreach services (13) and reaching nonusers (10). Access to new technology

geared for youth was mentioned by 9 librarians, as was training and funding. Others issues rounding out the most frequent list were recruiting and maintaining qualified staff, more and varied programming, and networking with community agencies.

The sample group had as its third most frequently mentioned need three topics: relevant programming, more space, and funding. Other items receiving attention were more funding for programs and programming materials, outreach, access to new technology, more programming, and administrative support for youth services.

Critical Needs in Serving Young Adults

Across the three groups, the main theme seems to be lack of resources for and activities in young adult services at the local level. Lack of designated YA staff tops the list of needs for all three groups, with it being reported by 33 directors (n=63), 24 children's librarians (n=68), and 20 sample respondents (n=48). Collections, programming, reaching teens, and space also ranked among the top needs in serving young adults.

Directors gave both improved collections and separate space second ranking (19 each), followed by the need to attract teen users to the library (17). Funding (11) heads the next level of needs, followed by outreach services for young adults, recruiting and maintaining qualified staff, and more programming (10 mentions each). Training and convincing the community, board, and staff of the value of YA services round out the directors critical needs list.

Enhanced collections and a separate, identifiable space follow staff as the most critical needs in young adult services for children's librarians (23 responses each). Attracting new teen users (14) and more meaningful programming (12) follow as other priorities. Access to technology is cited as a critical need by 10 librarians. Convincing the community, administration, and other staff of the importance of young adult services received 9 mentions and training 8. Other concerns included training, outreach services, and the total absence of services for teens.

After staff, the sample respondents ranked meaningful programming (18). They gave equal weight to three issues: improved collections, funding, and reaching nonusers (12 each). Training and convincing others of the value of YA services completes this group's most critical needs list.

Youth Statistics

Each library system was asked about their use of output measures. Over half reported non-use of output measures (39, 53.4%); 34 libraries do collect output measures. Of those libraries collecting output measures, the majority collected data in the programming (26) and materials use (24) categories. Third ranked was library use measures (19), followed by information services measures (15). All measures were used by at least five libraries. Mid-sized libraries (serving populations of 25,000 to 100,000) were the most likely to use output measures.

Other management information also is limited for the majority of the libraries. Youth services staff have minimal access to input measures, including collection size, registered borrowers, and percentage of

materials budget. Number of children's items is collected by only 46.5% of the libraries (n=71), and number of items in the young adult collection is collected by only 38% of the libraries. Many of the figures reported are an under-representation, since the figure sometimes excludes non-print materials. An even smaller percentage have information on registered borrowers. Only 26.8% know the number of children registered. For young adult borrowers, the figure is even lower, only 14.1%. In addition, when these four figures were reported some were estimates. Sometimes only merged figures (children's and young adults) were available. Finally, budget percentages for materials were available for children's acquisitions in 52.1% of the libraries (n=73), but for only 28.8% of libraries in young adult acquisitions.

Collaborative Activities

Youth services staff in Florida libraries do reach out of the library to cooperate with other agencies and organizations serving youth. Among the children's librarians, 90.4% (n=73) said they collaborated with other agencies. Among the sample branch libraries, 87.8% (n=49) reported collaborative activities. Librarians identified a broad range of agencies and organizations as collaborators in local communities.

In both the coordinator and sample surveys, the most frequently listed groups were daycare providers or services, private and public schools, and preschools. Others cited across population groups were: social service agencies, parks and/or recreation departments, local organizations, Head Start, community centers, and youth groups (e.g., scouts).

Staffing

Each administrative unit was asked for counts on staffing throughout the library system. Two or less staff were assigned to children's in 64.1% of the libraries (n=64). For young adult staffing, two or less people were assigned in 96.1% of the libraries reporting (n=51). No staff was assigned to young adult services in 56.9% of the libraries. Respondents were also queried on the full-time equivalents assigned system-wide for children's and young adult services. For children's services, 2 or less FTEs were assigned by 66.1% of the libraries (n=56). Four or less FTEs were reported by 80.4% of the libraries. In contrast, one or less FTEs were assigned to young adult services in 86.3% of the libraries (n=51). Only two libraries reported more than two FTEs assigned to young adult services.

Among the children's librarians, a masters degree in library science was reported by 64.4% of the respondents (n=73). The larger the library, the more likely to have an MLS degreed children's specialist. Only twelve libraries reported MLS staff assigned to young adult services; not all of these were full time. Over half of the respondents in the sample survey had MLS degrees, but were not necessarily exclusively youth services people.

To get a picture of the level of staff committed to youth services at the branches, the sample survey respondents were asked how many hours were devoted per week, on the average, to children's and young adult services. A wide range of

hours were reported for children's services, from 1 to 102 hours per week. The average was 30.8 hours, but the median or middle value (50% of the libraries) was 20 hours per week (n=41). For young adult services, the most frequently reported figure was zero hours. The range was 0 to 77 hours per week. The average was 18.1 hours, but the median value was only 4.5 hours (n=34).

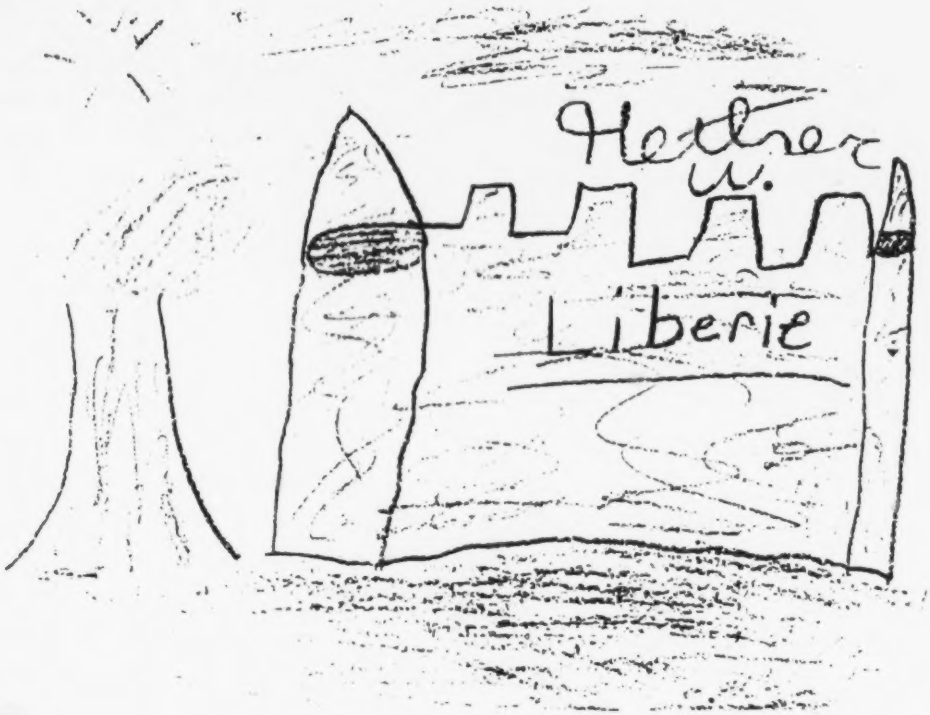
Access

The majority of libraries offered library cards from birth for children with parental permission (51.5%, n=68). Age five or when able to sign their own names combined with parental permission was the next highest reported policy (27.9%). The oldest age reported for a child to have his/her own card with parental permission was 7.

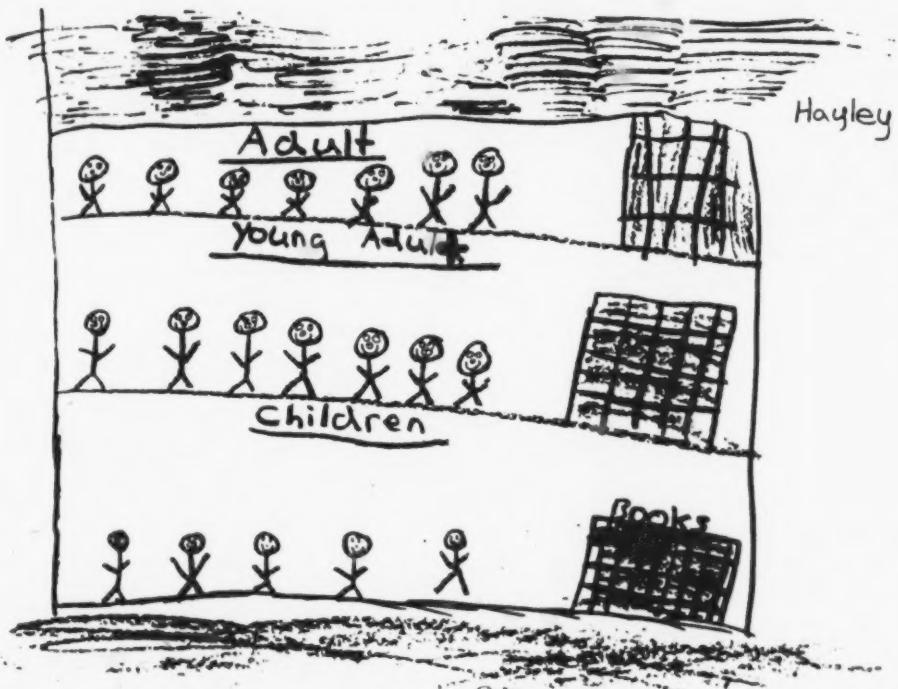
The vast majority required children to be teenagers prior to getting a library without parental permission (95.7%, n=69). Eighteen was the most commonly used age (30.4% of the libraries), followed by age 14 (23.2%) and age 13 (15.9%).

No age restrictions were placed on the use of collection by the majority of the libraries (53.0%, n=66). Of those with restrictions, most identified video collections as restricted (58.1%, n=31). The most likely age for access was 18. Another four libraries only indicated audiovisual collections, which would include videos. Only six reported restricting access to the adult collection; in all cases access was allowed before the age of 18.

A

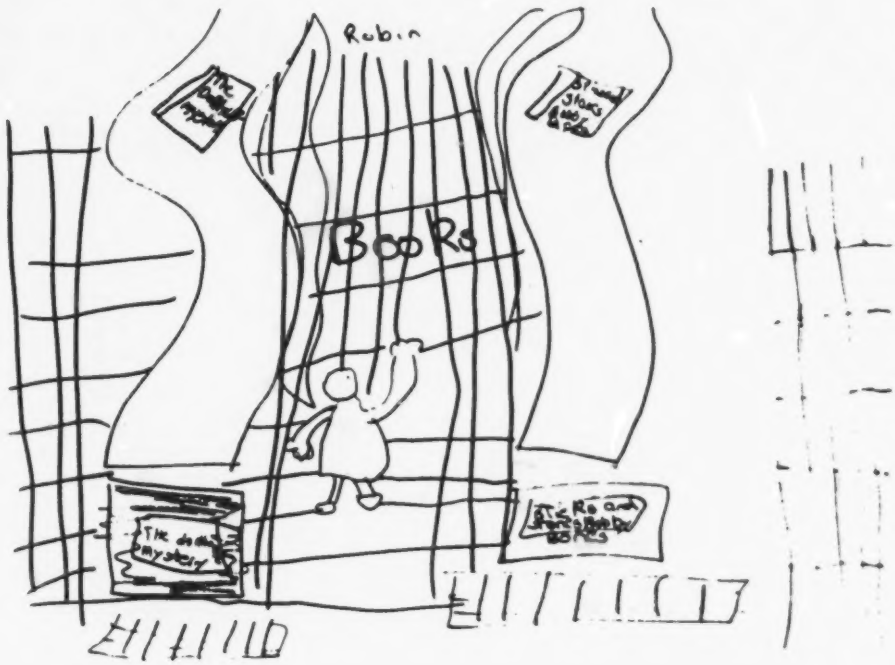


B

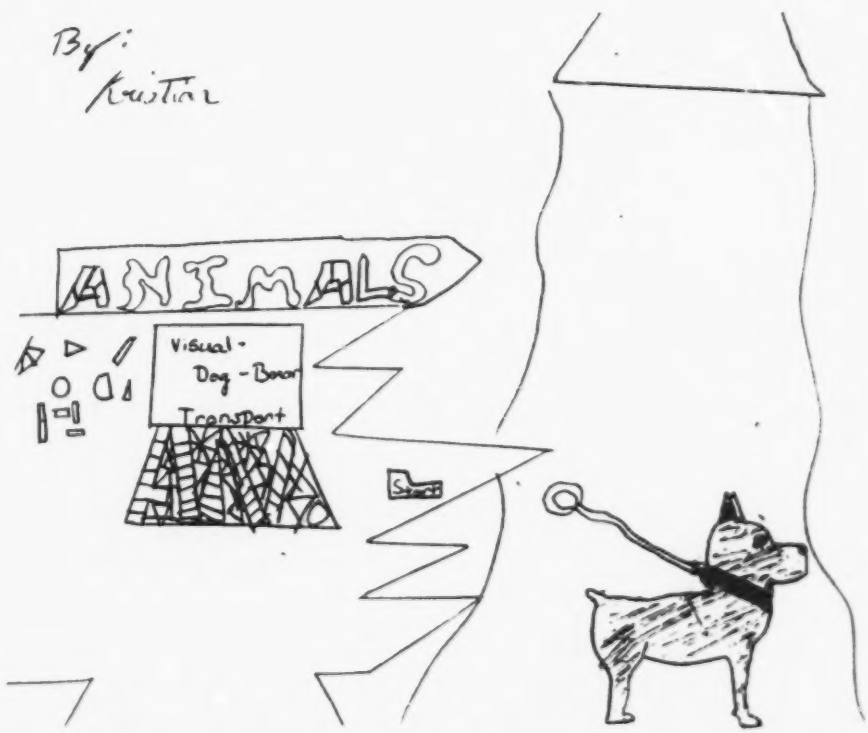


25

C

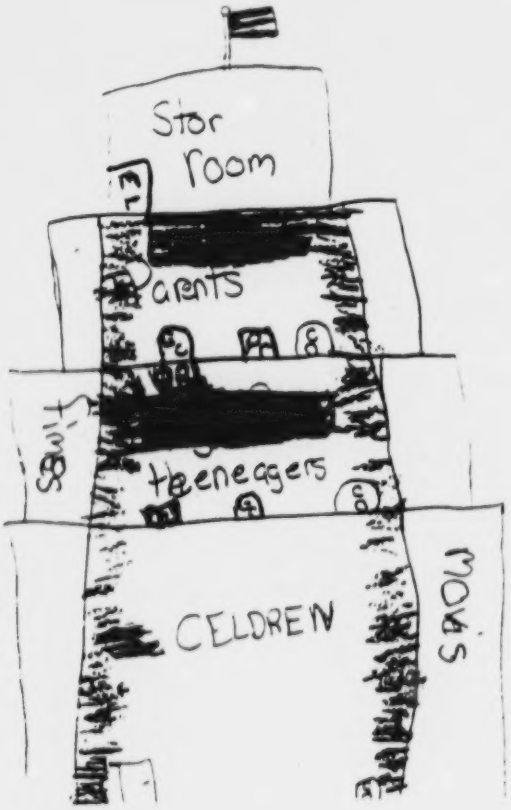


D

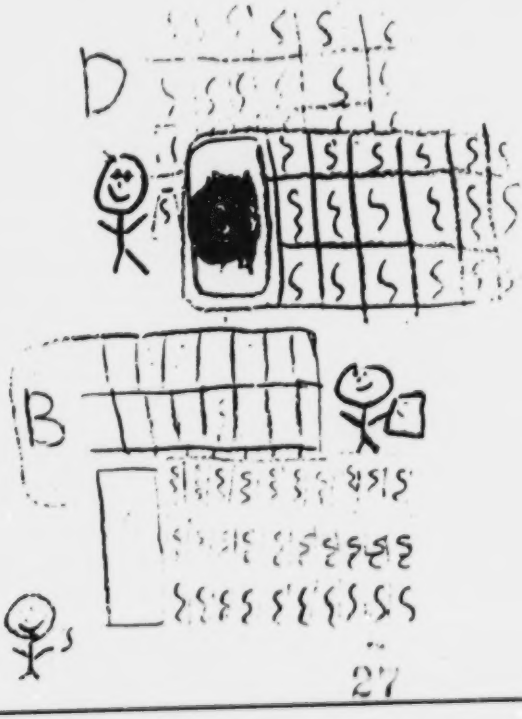


BEST COPY AVAILABLE

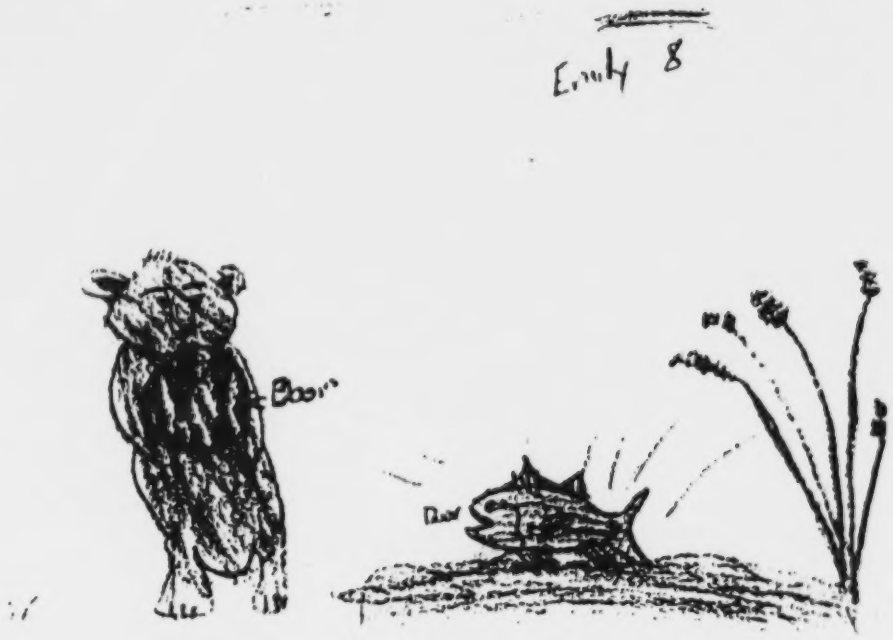
E



F



G


Emily 8
Boom
Roar

Children Media
MEEting room
Science and Social Studies MEEting
age 10-18
ROOM
REC
Playroom
Girls
Bathroom

Chapter 2
The Role of the State Library in Youth Services

Several sources of data were used to evaluate the state's current role in public library youth services and to identify priority areas for the State Library. These sources included focus groups, questionnaires, and State Library documents. This section reviews the evaluation findings from these sources. Staff interviews provided additional insight.

Focus Groups

The State Library of Florida sponsored six focus groups for public librarians during the summer 1994. In addition to the six librarian groups, one group of state-level agencies met to discuss the role of the State Library in relation to other youth service efforts at the state level. This group met in Tallahassee in August.

Each group discussed issues in three areas: the effect of the State Library efforts on local practice, strengths of the current State Library efforts, and areas of development for the State Library of Florida in youth services. The comments elicited during the interviews show a wide range of ideas and specific suggestions. Across this variety, however, several themes emerged consistently among the six groups of librarians and one group of state-level program representatives. These themes are listed below and serve as an organizing device for the discussion of the focus group results in this section.

- Respect for the quality and usefulness of the Florida Library Youth Program manual, workshops, and graphics.
- The continued need for training at all levels and on a diversity of topics.
- The difficulty of reaching the young adult population.
- The need for modeling networking and cooperation at the state level.
- The need for youth services to gain access to electronic networks and technology.
- Recognition of the quality of the youth services consulting, but a desire for more availability.
- A desire for a strong leadership role by the state to promote the value of youth services among library administrators, boards, and other decision makers.
- The need for better management information to make a case to administration and other decision makers.
- A preference for a better method of communicating among youth services people, especially to share ideas and avoid duplication of effort.

FLYP

A current State Library service—the Florida Library Youth Program (FLYP)—generally received positive remarks in the focus groups. The State Library's support of this program was characterized as "steady and very good." FLYP was

described as "wonderful. It has matured and developed." It has been "an impetus for local programming." The bibliographies in the manuals were mentioned as a plus by several librarians, especially those working in smaller libraries. The high quality graphics would be out of reach for many smaller libraries if the state did not design them. "It is important to remember the problems of smaller libraries." The themes "stimulated new ideas," and "without the state theme we would be more limited in our ideas."

Several librarians mentioned the value of pre-designed programs. "It is difficult planning a massive amount of programming for different age groups." "I just pull from the manual when I have a program to do." Help in "identifying sources for programs in the community" was mentioned in relation to FLYP. Designated funding for programming was reported as limited in some libraries.

The workshops offered in conjunction to the manual and printed materials received high praise and were cited as "very helpful." "I've always been able to use something from the training." The manuals and ideas learned from workshops have a life after the year their initial use. Librarians reported using or "recycling" the ideas from the old programs. "The manual can be stretched from year to year." "We use the information and sourcebook year round." Even participation on the FLYP planning committee was seen as useful. "The assignments within the committee provide insight and networking opportunities."

One key criticism of FLYP (previously known as the summer library program) was that it was too targeted to the younger children. Some improvement was reported. One librarian commented, "We have not participated in the program for several years because the focus seemed to be getting younger and younger. But we will probably start participating again because it seems they are starting to focus on older children as well." More is needed, however, since librarians still perceived the need for change. Programming in the manual is still "weak for the upper elementary grades" and "really stops at the third grade." "Kids are more sophisticated now, so the programs need to be geared for older children." A few participants suggested actually splitting the program into two components—one for children and one for YAs, each with their own graphics, manual, and training.

Continued emphasis on the year-round aspect of FLYP programming is needed; some were still not clear that a real shift had taken place from the summer library program to FLYP. "We need broad themes that will help us year-round with our programming." "The trend is to keep them interested all year so they don't fall out of the habit of using the library."

Streamlining the process and cost for FLYP was raised in some of the groups. The value of the project is not questioned, but rather ways to make the annual process more efficient. A suggestion was made for multi-year themes in one manual. Questions were raised such as "What parts of the process were repetitious each year?" and "Could money be put into a basic manual for beginners?" The "savings" would go toward more training by the State Library or funding of local programs. A related

worry was that the attention given to this activity leads to the exclusion or less attention to other needs in the youth services area. It is of no surprise to the State Library that some of the Florida libraries do not use FLYP. The main reason given was that the local program was "incentive-driven" and therefore, did not fit in the FLYP model. Others mentioned a need for customized themes to fit multicultural neighborhoods.

Training

The State Library was commended for the quality of its training efforts. "The State Library is always right on target with the workshops." "They really help and are very practical." Many used the word "enthusiastic" to describe their response to the workshops. Without these workshops, "it would mean libraries are working in a vacuum . . . we wouldn't be up on the trends." Some felt the quality of their services would be negatively affected without the workshops and that "they help keep us from reinventing the wheel." For some, the fact that it was a State Library sponsored workshop gave it "the credibility needed to get approval to attend." The state-sponsored workshops were found to be "crucial to networking, especially for youth librarians to exchange ideas." This was particularly true for the rural areas and for municipal libraries.

The most recent young adult workshops were cited by many, even if "we cannot implement the ideas yet." These YA workshops were called "successful" and "very motivating and useful." Patrick Jones was described as "extremely inspirational and high quality." The output measures workshop was described as "outstanding" and very useful for planning. One person cited the planning information as responsible for saving the toy collection.

Consistent and strong support for more training at all levels and on a diversity of topics was found in every focus group. There was a need to reach all levels of staff, especially paraprofessionals. "The State Library can help by developing the knowledge of paraprofessionals." Among smaller libraries the difficulty was getting away from the library or sending the only staff person. Travel costs remain an issue for many of the libraries. Workshops definitely need to continue to be delivered regionally, although the desire for more narrowly defined regions was expressed. "Distance is a consideration. A one and a half hour drive should be the maximum." In one group, a two-hour driving limit was suggested. "The State Library needs to come to us; we are not going to pack up our staff and send them to Tallahassee." Weekend courses also were suggested.

Participants recognized that the State Library was not the sole provider of training, although it was an important one. The library schools in Florida were mentioned as needing more continuing education offerings. Improved communication between the two library associations in the state was recommended as an aid to coordinating training. The youth networks were of varying strength throughout the state. In places where the networks were active, they could serve as trainers or hosts for training. Communicating about continuing education opportunities in a timely and inclusive manner was important. Some participants

said they found out about the events "after they occurred." "Training announcements should be sent to multiple people in each system." The State Library was seen as a potential source of information of related training opportunities offered by other youth organizations and agencies, a "kind of clearinghouse."

Topics suggested for training were diverse, but most frequently mentioned were technology, management skills (especially convincing decision makers), and grant writing. "Technology training would be most helpful, even if we don't have it in our branch yet." Technology "trade shows" would be helpful if they showcase "what works in libraries." Other topics receiving mention were: collection development, innovative programs, developing youth volunteer programs, communicating with Hispanic and Asian patrons, and alternative funding sources. One person suggested a "book-focused professional day . . . a children's reading festival for professionals."

Several suggested a role for larger libraries to be trainers for smaller libraries. In addition, visits to larger libraries could be a form of continuing education. Of particular interest were workshops that "covered the basics" and that were offered regularly. Workshops that allowed for sharing and "a better forum for brainstorming and networking" in conjunction with presentations were desired.

Building on previous workshops also was recommended, rather than having them as isolated events. "Repeated offerings to allow more than one chance to attend" and "follow-up after a workshop" would be helpful. "Follow-up is essential. How can they implement information learned and monitor its development?" A chance to revisit workshop topics after trying things locally was desired.

Young Adults

As discussed in the previous chapter on local library needs, reaching the young adult population is a major challenge for local libraries. Librarians also see a critical need for the State Library in "focusing attention on young adults." "We need innovative, interest-based programming ideas that work." Special service topics mentioned were author visits, teen volunteer programs, English-as-a-second-language (ESOL) needs, and literacy services for teens and offered by young adults. "We need a state-level role model to follow, with suggestions for materials and resources to help serve young adults." Grants (from non-library grant sources) for young adult programming written and administered by the state were recommended. Likewise, grant opportunities for YA services needed to be publicized more by the state. Linking those staff interested in young adult services was a key role for the state. "YA network meetings need to be publicized," the networks needed to be "better connected," and YA service ideas need to be better communicated throughout the state.

Specific concerns in working with YAs was communicated. "What bothers me is that there is a serious lack of understanding of the psychological make up of teenagers today." Another noted that "there is a big difference in the 12 to 15 age group and the 16+ group." "Libraries are not friendly to

teens. We ask them to leave their natural behavior outside the door." "Anyone working with teens must find out what makes them tick." The State Library was seen a major communicator about the needs of young adults. Training and consulting assistance helps local libraries better understand this population group.

Some participants were very specific about the need for a specialist that concentrates on young adults at the State Library. The current consultant has too many other responsibilities. By designating a special YA consultant, "the State Library would be showing their support of the idea of YA librarians." "The consultant needs to be someone with a strong voice who is an advocate of YA services. If we have this, we will receive more information and communication on an ongoing basis."

Collaboration

Local librarians expressed the need for and value of collaborating with youth agencies and organizations. They see a need for cooperation to begin among agencies at that level. This, in turn, would give impetus for local cooperation from local units of these state-level organizations and agencies. "When we approach a local branch of a state agency, it would be nice if they knew it was `okay' to work with us." The desire was for the inquiries not to always come from the library side. "Many agencies don't inform the library about proposed programs until the last minute or after it's in place. There is not enough networking and resource sharing."

The need for modeling networking and cooperation at the state level was frequently mentioned across the focus groups. Opening and maintaining channels of communication among state-level groups was seen as an important role for the State Library. "Agency to agency communication is essential." "State-level cooperative ventures could be a good way to enhance library service." Overcoming the bureaucracy in Tallahassee was assigned to the State Library. "Why can't more inter-agency cooperation go on statewide? That means an agency talking to an agency." Building a "coalition of various organizations that work with youth" would serve as a model to local agencies.

An example of state-level collaboration was the identification of funding sources and coordination of library linkages to the agencies eligible for the funds. Examples included juvenile justice dollars and Manpower grants. "The money is there . . . we just need to find it." The Florida Department of Education was the most frequently mentioned partner for the State Library. "The State Library could coordinate and push collaboration with the Florida Department of Education to help support local programs." "The State Library needs to intermesh with the Department of Education" and "provide a liaison with us and the state education department." This link was referred to as "a support bridge" for local efforts. More cooperation between the State Library of Florida and the library schools in the state was desired. Setting up electronic communication among the agencies and organizations serving youth was seen as a possible State Library role.

The focus group session with state agency personnel revealed an equal interest in such cooperation. All saw the public

library as a logical partner. "One player must be the public library, incorporated from the local level up to the Department of Education." Initiatives such as services to at risk families, family literacy, involvement of older adults, homeschooling, and juvenile justice were identified as areas for potential cooperative efforts. The librarian's knowledge of literature and access to information were seen as valuable assets in these possible collaborations. Likewise, the group did not think "the libraries should have to do all these things on their own." The group agreed that "locals need a stamp of approval" from the state agency for working with public libraries and to promote "grassroots collaboration." The newsletters of the various state-level organizations and agencies are a good information source and could be vehicles for sharing information about the library efforts in these areas. Inviting librarians to training and creating interagency agreements were other methods proposed to improve the networking among organizations working with youth.

Technology

The need for youth services to gain access to electronic networks and technology came up in the discussion of local needs and in the talk about the roles of the State Library. As noted in the previous chapter, much needs to be done to bring technology and youth services together. Training in technology was a top need identified in the discussion of continuing education for youth services staff. General support and advice in technology is desired, along with "keeping you abreast of what is available." "Access and other policy issues related to technology" are a concern for local libraries. "What kind of guaranteed access is going to be available to kids and teens?" An 800 number to access Internet via the State Library was requested.

Technology is seen as a way to reach young adults. "We now have an opportunity to attract this age group. Computers attract teens, and they like communicating electronically." Others saw use of technology in youth services as giving youth services the "same respect other librarians get." The key local need is that "everyone is at a different level. Not every library outlet is on an equal technological plane."

Another State Library role described was helping local libraries make an "educated case" for technology in youth services. "It is incumbent upon children's librarians to document this need and communicate this need to administration." Aiding local librarians in becoming better consumers of technology was important. "It is hard to weed out what data bases are available for kids and how to get a system started." This need was seen as especially critical in small libraries, although all participants felt a need to know more about technology. Someone to answer questions about CD-ROM products for youth was mentioned as useful. A general concern was that automation advice currently available from the State Library concentrated on major systems or electronic communication, rather than stand-alone products.

Consulting

There was wide-spread recognition of the quality of the youth services consulting from the State Library of Florida. They

have "always been there as a support for our programming and services . . . the advice and opinions are important." The "support and moral support via the phone" was valued. As with access to Internet, some suggested an 800-number for reaching the State Library staff. Examples given of use of the consulting information were for "ammunition on how to fight a major increase in juvenile fines," copyright laws, and assistance on censorship issues. The consultant could access information via Internet for local libraries. The youth consultant and State and Federal Grants Office staff were commended for their assistance on grant preparation.

The satisfaction with the current consulting is tempered by a desire for more availability of consulting services. Those who were aware that the current youth services consultant had additional duties recommended that these be reassigned to allow for complete concentration on youth services. "Consultants need to go out into the field where they are really needed." One group had consensus on this issue: "more consultants and more in the field." Toll-free access to state consultants was suggested. Information on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and bibliographies on issues and for collection development also were highlighted as consulting and information needs. Others were not aware they could go to the State Library consultant directly with questions.

Leadership

A desire for a strong leadership role by the state was expressed by focus group participants. This leadership would promote the value of youth services among library administrators, boards, and other decision makers. Several comments were very specific about this need. "The state needs to convince administrators of the importance of YA services." "A focus needs to be put on library administrators." "Library directors need to know there is more to youth services than the summer programs and reading stories to preschoolers."

"Making the case" for libraries and youth at the state level was seen as necessary. "There needs to be an overall advancement of librarians and their role in the state." The State Library needs to "create an awareness that there is an advantage to pumping money into libraries." "Statewide campaigns that target the importance of libraries in serving youth" were encouraged. "High level public relations with legislators, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Department of Education are needed." This activity also is connected to the earlier discussion on collaboration.

Another key leadership activity was "bringing the Goals 2000 to reality and into focus" for libraries. The State Library has a role in coordinating "statewide public library efforts, on behalf of youth, for participation in the National Education Goals for the year 2000." This would help communicate the public library role in meeting the goals and "begin to identify and communicate to youth services staff members information about programs and resources" that can assist libraries in meeting the goals.

Linked to this leadership role was a need for recruitment activities. "I would like to see more recruiting efforts and not only for diversity. I am constantly coming across

people who work with youth in other agencies that would be good youth services librarians." Recruitment was ranked as an important local concern, so the State Library could assist libraries with that need.

Management Information

Locally, youth services staff need information to aid decision making and convince other decision makers. Additional information could "give insight to all aspects of our roles." The key question seemed to be: "How can we be the most effective? That is what we need to know." "Output measures are not all you need." "Finding the true costs and benefits to the taxpayers" was identified as a priority. This includes developing a system for tracking "time and money spent" for library services. Identifying and quantifying the benefits were seen as the most difficult. "We need to create an awareness of the impact libraries have." "We need to develop a means of tracking feedback and apparent results of youth library programs." Further, "we need to be able to measure benefits . . . in a `numbers' language that can speak to administrators." Specifically, librarians noted a lack of numbers to support their planning. This includes statistics on their own programs, comparative statistics statewide, and numbers on the size and nature of the client groups libraries are trying to reach.

One way to build support for improved services would be standards or guidelines for youth services at local libraries. "It is something we would love to have." "They look to cut us first, so we need standards for justification." Grassroots developed standards could be incorporated with the public library standards and need to consider the resources of different size libraries. There was a concern, however, that unless the standards took the form of a mandate, "our administrators won't be likely to comply." "The state aid requirements could be stronger" in the youth services area.

Communication

A preference for a better method of communicating among youth services people was indicated, especially to share ideas and avoid duplication of effort. "The State Library could help by communicating better." "We should not have to reinvent the wheel every time we do a program." While the *Orange Seed* does contain information about youth services, this is not always seen by youth services staff. Some noted "that they receive issues after most events have gone on." "It would be nice to have a one-page mail-out of local library youth activities" or "a hot news bulletin." A timely and widely distributed youth services newsletter received broad support across the groups. Questions raised by one library with the State Library could be reported back to all libraries, since similar questions were probably raised in other locations.

E-mail or Internet were recommended by some as a way to improve communication. Faxes have been useful for sending information, but total dependency on electronic communication at this point would be premature. "E-mail is not a workable alternative at this time." Youth services staff do not have access in many locations in the state. The potential of using this approach should not be ignored, however. Librarians could see the value of

this approach when it was a feasible alternative. One concrete suggestion for use of electronic communication was an "electronic mailbox where interested people can write brief notations or reviews of YA material to be shared by all."

Improved communication "might help focus a group of libraries to obtain joint grants." Identifying and publicizing potential sources of funding for programs was mentioned frequently as a role for the State Library. A related issue is networking. "The vision of isolation is a problem." The children's and YA networks have varying levels of activity, so they needed some encouragement by the State Library. Librarians felt they needed more opportunities to "swap" materials and ideas. "Try to get smaller groups together to discuss issues, trends, and programs." This could be facilitated electronically in the future. Just talking by telephone was seen as useful given the problem of travel costs.

Roles for the State Library

As a way of summarizing the interview, each person was asked for a word or phrase that would describe the desired role or priority for the State Library of Florida in the youth services area. The descriptors suggest the following roles:

- **Communicating**, especially of information, trends, and what is happening in the local libraries. Other related ideas: information disseminator, the "big picture," information clearinghouse, awareness of national efforts, research on new things, and information transfer.
- **Training** on a variety of topics and for different staff levels.
- **Advocacy**, including publicity for youth services with decision makers (local and state), political clout, leadership, and advancing *Goals 2000*.
- **Networking**, including coordination and facilitation—the State Library as a switchboard.
- **Consulting** or as generally expressed, support. Related concepts included expertise, advice, available, looking for and identifying alternative funding sources, way to make the case for youth services, help with new things or services, for small libraries, inspirational, and reaching target groups.
- **Collaborating** at the state level with other agencies that serve young people, cross-agency cooperation, and state-level coalitions.

Less frequently mentioned were the roles of innovator, including testing of new approaches and models, and recruiter, working with library schools and aiding in the recruitment of MLS-degreed librarians in youth services.

In conclusion, the overall tone of the focus group interviews was positive toward the State Library of Florida's efforts, particularly with the summer (and now year-round) library programs, expertise of the current consultant, and quality of the training opportunities sponsored by the State Library. As indicated in the above discussion, the desired State Library's role in the future continues in these areas, with expansion of activities in consulting and training and more focused attention on leadership and advocacy, communication, and state-level interagency cooperation.

Questionnaires

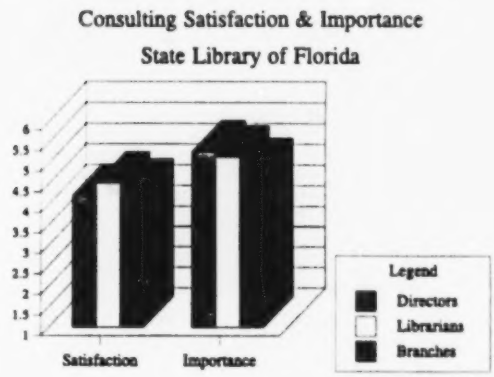
The focus group results were supplemented with three sets of questionnaires administered to all library directors, designated children's librarians for each library administrative unit, and a sample of branch youth services staff. The results parallel the themes that emerged from the focus groups and as such, serve as validation for those interviews. The data show consistent support for roles that emerged from the focus groups, but allow for a more quantitative ranking of the needs expressed by the Florida library community.

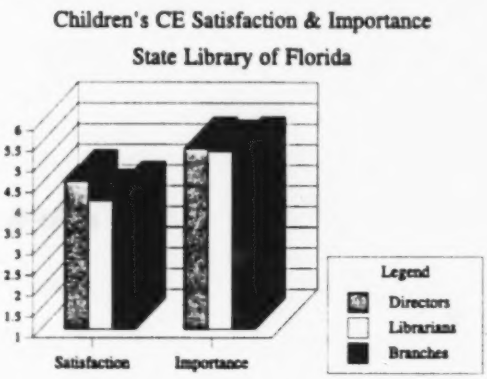
Satisfaction and Importance Ratings

Across all three groups of respondents, satisfaction ratings for the services of the State Library of Florida were well within the acceptable range. The lowest reported average scores were 3.4 on a six-point scale. The scale ranged from not satisfied to completely satisfied. All three groups gave the highest marks to the summer library program (FLYP). Directors and the sample respondents each gave it an average rating of 4.9; children's librarians gave it a 4.6 average rating. Comments cited in relation to these ratings suggest a need for increased attention to programming and materials for the upper elementary age group.

Director's gave the children's services workshops the next highest satisfaction ratings (4.6), followed by consulting (4.2), and young adult workshops (3.7). These somewhat lower ratings relate to the need for more of each of these services, rather than a statement about the quality of the workshops and consulting.

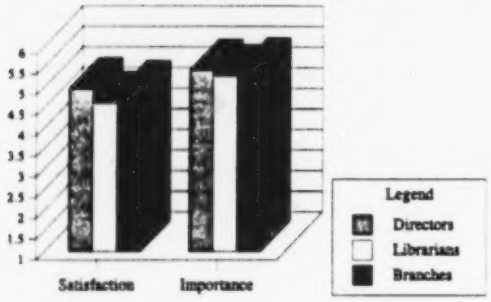
The children's librarians and the sample



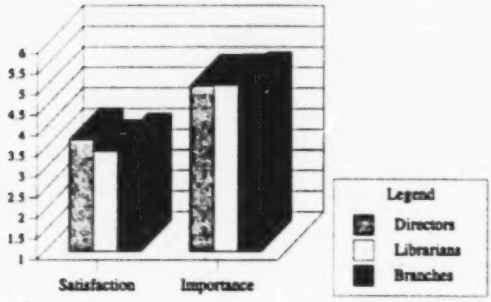


respondents departed slightly from the directors on the rest of their satisfaction ratings. They gave the next highest satisfaction ratings to consulting (4.5 and 4.4 respectively), followed by children's services workshops (4.1 and 4.3) and young adult workshops (3.4 and 3.6). These two groups were also asked about their satisfaction with the State Library's efforts in promoting local cooperation between libraries and other agencies serving youth. The children's librarians gave this moderate marks only, 3.4 average, and the sample groups responded in kind with an average rating of 3.5.

FLYP Satisfaction & Importance
State Library of Florida



YA CE Satisfaction & Importance
State Library of Florida



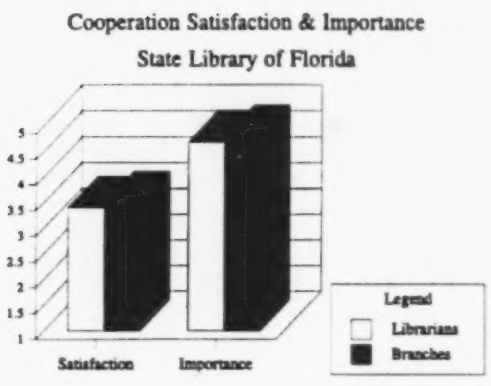
In order to help establish the value placed on the State Library of Florida's services, each group was asked about the importance of each of these items. The six-point scale ranged from not important to extremely important. The results in this section ran significantly higher than these obtained in the satisfaction questions. The lowest average rating was 4.8.

All three groups placed equal importance on the summer library program (FLYP) and children's services workshops. Directors gave both a 5.4 average rating, librarians a 5.3, and sample respondents a 5.4. Consulting ranked next in importance for directors (5.3) and children's librarians (5.1), followed by young adult workshops (5.0 average rating for both groups). The sample respondents ranked young adult workshops (5.1) higher than consulting (4.9). Children's librarians and the sample respondents rated the importance of the State Library's role in cooperation last, with 4.7 and 4.8 respectively. Given the overall high ratings in this section, however, all of these services are ranked highly by the library community.

Use of State Library Services

A few questions on the children's librarian and sample surveys addressed use of the State Library's youth services activities. The majority of children's librarians reported that they or their staff have attended a children's services workshop in the last three years (91.8%, n=73). In the sample, a similarly high participation rate was reported: 89.8% (n=49). Many of these indicated that this attendance was linked to FLYP, the summer library program. The attendance at young adult services workshops was dramatically lower, with 43.1% of the children's librarians attending (n=72) and only 35.4% of the sample attending (n=48). In light of the limited resources committed to young adult services locally, this is not a surprising figure (see YA needs section).

Participants did incorporate ideas from the workshops when they attended. Drawing on a six-point scale, from none to a great deal, those who had attended a children's workshop were more likely to use the ideas than those attending young



adult workshops. Among the children's librarians, reported use of ideas obtained an average rating of 4.5; for the sample, this was 4.6. Use of the young adult ideasreceived an average rating of 3.2 by both groups. This again is a reflection on the limited staffing designated in local libraries for young adult services.

Among children's librarians, over 90 percent report participating in FLYP, thesummer library program (93.1%, n=72). In the branch sample group, 83.7% participate (n=49). Among those not participating, the main reason given is a system-wide decision to design a unique summer theme.

Ways the State Library Can Help

The focus of the answers here tended to relate to additional services the State Library could provide, although existing services also were mentioned. This was especially true for FLYP. To better meet the challenges faced locally, all three groups overwhelmingly saw the State Library as a primary source of training of professional and support staff in youth services. The need for training received the highest number of mentions, over a third in each of the three groups. Directors mentioned it 21 times (n=60), children's librarians 25 times (n=62), and sample respondents 18 times (n=46).

Directors were more likely to cite funding as a critical role for the State Library. Twenty directors said more state funding and grant opportunities were needed to meet local needs. State aid for all libraries was cited by 14 directors (11 of which were from non-state aid libraries), although this did not link exclusively to use for youth services locally. Consulting services/expertise received the next highest mentions (8), followed by.leadership and advocacy, young adult activities, recruitment of qualified youth services librarians, and improved communication among youth services staff (e.g., newsletter, coordinated information sharing).

Children's librarians also rated additional funding and grant opportunities as the second most frequently (13), followed by leadership and advocacy (11). Other frequently cited services were consulting services (8) and improved communication among youth services librarians (7). The sample respondents ranked funding and leadership equally as their second choice (8 each), followed by the FLYP and young adult activities.

A number of topics, when responses are combined across the three groups, also received some support. These include those related to the management of youth services, including setting benchmarks for youth services in Florida's public libraries and connecting at the state level with

agencies and organizations serving youth. Specific services given attention were: programming ideas and packages, bibliographies of items for local purchase, and greater access to the Internet and other electronic resources for youth.

Priorities for the State Library of Florida

Overall, fewer respondents were willing to cite priorities for the State Library's efforts in youth services, with nearly 25% less answering this question. Still, given that the responses were received by two-thirds of the total respondents and the similarity of these findings with those from the focus groups suggests the value of this set of responses.

The majority in all three groups chose training as their number one priority for the State Library. A total of 26 directors cited this service (n=44), 35 children's librarians (n=53), and 11 of the sample respondents (n=30). The desire for training equated for nearly half with training offered regionally or locally. A wide variety of topics were mentioned, especially those covering new technology, management of youth services, programming ideas, and collection issues.

Among the directors, the other frequently mentioned priorities were: consulting services (10), FLYP (9), funding (8), leadership and advocacy (7), programming ideas and assistance (7), and enhanced communication among youth services librarians (6).

The other frequently mentioned services by the children's librarians are similar, although in slightly different rank order. Leadership and advocacy received the next highest responses (12), followed by FLYP, enhanced communication among youth services librarians, and programming ideas and assistance receiving ten votes each. Consulting services (9) and funding (9) come next on the list, followed by young adult activities, bibliographies, and improved access to technology for youth.

In the sample survey, the second most frequent response was leadership and advocacy. This was followed by programming ideas and assistance, funding, and the summer library program.

Conclusion

The State Library is respected for its role in youth services. As one focus group member noted, "The State Library making youth a priority has helped greatly." Others knew that they were fortunate to have the State Library give attention to youth services, "since other state libraries don't do this." "Anything the State Library has done has improved our work." Other comments included: "the State Library does a terrific job considering its own limitations" and "the children's librarians are especially appreciative of the State Library." A lot of this positive feeling toward the efforts in youth services is attributed to the current youth services consultant.

There was satisfaction with existing State Library services, and all ranked highly in importance. The focus groups provided parallel findings and allowed for more in-depth discussion of the key issues about local needs and State Library priorities. There is a strong desire to retain the current services from the State Library, with some areas of improvement. In addition, some new directions were suggested.

The priorities identified for the State Library of Florida are clearly linked to the local needs detailed in the previous chapter. Local libraries recognized that the State Library was not a surrogate for high quality local youth services, but that it was critical role to the support and development of those local efforts.

The final chapter of this report offers recommendations derived from the multiple data sources used in this evaluation process. These include maintenance of effort, enhancement of the State Library's current role, and some future directions. Recommended changes to the LSCA long-range plan are detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3
The LSCA Plan for Library Service to Youth

The LSCA long-range plan for service to youth has as its primary objective "to achieve quality level public library service for children and young adults of all backgrounds and abilities throughout the state in all outlets of every library." While this study did not have comparative data for comparison, at this point in time there is evidence that the State Library of Florida has assisted local libraries in their efforts to reach this objective. As reported in earlier sections of this report, the efforts in training, programming (FLYP), and consulting have received positive ratings by local libraries. In addition, grants awarded directly to local libraries help the state meet some of the intermediate objectives stated for this goal. Grants awarded in the youth services area have been linked to this goal. During the last five fiscal years (FY90 to FY94), a total of 67 grants have been awarded in youth services in the areas of programming, collections, and outreach services. In addition, local library decisions, efforts, and funding help move the state in the directions specified in this plan.

In testing the assumptions found under this objective, some evidence is available. Each of these assumptions are listed below.

Professional librarians with a specialized interest in children's and young adult services should be assigned to work with these age groups.

The survey data show a majority of the libraries having professional staff assigned to children's services, although this is greatly reduced for professional staff assigned to young adult services (as is the case nationally). This staffing pattern is not reflective of the size of the children's population compared to the young adult population or of the level of need in each age group. When comparing population figures in Florida, the 1994 estimate of the number of children (0 to 9) is 940,500. The estimated number of young adults (10 to 17) is 1,287,500. Estimates for the year 2000 show a similar result: children 1,006,100 and young adults 1,495,600. (Figures from *Florida Consensus Estimating Conference*, Book 3, Volume 10, Spring 1994, Table 5.)

Collections must be established to include a wide range of materials, both print and non-print, in order to present information in as much depth as possible, from all points of view, for all ability levels.

Youth services in Florida are collection-based, so this assumption has merit, especially for children's collections. Diverse collections are a standard that Florida libraries aspire to, but both librarians and users highly rank improved and extended collections as a major need in both the children's and young adult areas. One concern that

ranked highly, however, was access to electronic information for children and young adults. Libraries currently lack age-appropriate electronic information sources and computer equipment accessible to youth.

Information and materials should be actively disseminated by means of programming, aggressive public relations, and outreach services.

Evidence of programming came out in the focus group interviews with librarians and users, in reports of the use of FLYP, and an earlier report of public library educational activity by Terrie and Summers (1987). Librarians in the focus groups saw programming as a priority area, but as is the case with other topics, the strength lies in children's programming over young adult programming. Three primary needs identified in this study relate to this assumption: improved programming for the upper elementary age and young adults, meeting the demand for outreach services, and making the case for the value of programming and outreach with local and statewide decision makers.

Services should be completely accessible to all segments of this population, e.g., handicapped, homebound, and rurally isolated persons.

This study did not directly address the accessibility issue. Study respondents also did not express this as a primary concern, although the need for outreach services relates to this issue. Local efforts to comply with ADA requirements help to achieve accessibility.

Intermediate Objectives

The intermediate objectives from the LSCA long range plan are listed below with indicators of progress gathered in this study. For the most part, the criteria for measuring progress specified in the long-range plan cannot be documented from this study or existing data available statewide.

To encourage every public library to have a children's specialist and *a young adults specialist in charge of the respective departments.*

The survey to the children's librarian designated for each public library in Florida included a question on staffing. While "specialist" is not defined in the LSCA plan, one widely accepted definition in libraries is having an MLS degree. A masters degree in library science was reported by 64.4% of the respondents. The larger the library, the more likely to have an MLS degreed children's specialist. Only twelve libraries reported MLS staff assigned to young adult services; not all of these were full time. Over half of the respondents in the sample survey had MLS degrees, but were not necessarily exclusively youth services people. Some LSCA dollars contribute to local staffing in youth services.

CRITERIA: No specific criteria are listed. The State Library could collect this data staffing periodically (three to five year cycle) as part of the annual report from public library. This would allow the state to monitor staffing trends in youth services.

To conduct workshops and in-service training on all phases of quality library services and development for children and young adults.

The conditions described under this objective still exist: a need for training at all levels of staffing. In both the focus groups and surveys, training was a predominant need for both MLS-degreed staff and especially for library staff without formal training. Two other groups were identified as needing training as well: adult services staff who also work with youth and administrators. For the former, the training would help build skills to work with all age patrons. For administrators, the training would be centered on awareness of youth services issues. The number of topics for training is almost limitless, although the most frequently mentioned across the data sources were technology, management, basic skills for non-MLS staff, and FLYP. Of particular concern were convenient locations for the training and progressive training (a series of events building on each other). Training from the State Library in youth services has been funded by LSCA during the last four years.

CRITERIA: All three measurements are not under the direct control of the State Library, so cannot be used as criteria for measuring progress toward this objective. Other data are available, however. When training is conducted by the State Library, evaluation forms show that over three-fourths of the participants rate the training as successful in meeting needs and of high quality. These positive ratings are further documented in the surveys in this study, with both children's and young adult workshops receiving above average satisfaction ratings. In addition, nearly 100 percent of those who attended the workshops reported making use of the information locally. In the future, the State Library can continue point-of-training evaluation and report total attendance and percent of first time attendees. Periodically, follow-up evaluation on training via group interviews or fast response questionnaires can address use of workshop information at local libraries and perceived impact of the training on local services over time.

To promote cooperation with other educational and social agencies working with children and young adults for the purpose of making youth services more effective throughout the state.

Cooperation does exist locally. In the questionnaires, 90.4 percent of the children's librarians (n=73) and 87.8 percent of the sample branch libraries (n=49 reported cooperating with other educational and social agencies working with children and young adults. On the other hand, a top ranked need was for the State Library to set the collaborative pattern by working with state level agencies and organizations to help pave the way for local collaborative efforts. Participants in the state-agency focus group indicated interest in such cooperative activities. Working with other community agencies was cited in some of the LSCA projects during the last five years. Daycare providers were

the most likely partners in these projects; others included schools, Head Start, and health care providers.

CRITERIA: The first criteria, "identification of social agencies providing services to youth," has happened to some degree. The youth services consultant has worked with some state agencies and promotes potential collaborations in training and manuals (e.g., FLYP and the new young adult manual). The other criteria cannot currently be documented. Periodically, the State Library can conduct a similar query to the one in the questionnaire from this study to give a "snapshot" of collaborative efforts statewide. Local libraries can be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of local collaborative efforts related to quality of service delivery and strength of the cooperative relationship. Collecting that information consistently from all libraries at the state level is not feasible; however sample data from those local evaluation efforts can aid in describing the effect of collaboration locally.

To assist in establishing and expanding up-to-date collections of print and non-print materials.

The direct effect of the State Library in this area is most closely linked to LSCA grants awarded that included funds for collection development. In addition, the bibliographies in the FLYP manual and the new young adult manual aid local libraries in building collections. At the same time, improved and expanded collections ranked highly as a need for both children's and young adults, and assistance in identifying appropriate materials for young adults was of particular concern. As noted earlier in this chapter, access to electronic resources for youth is very limited and is a growth area under this objective.

CRITERIA: The user satisfaction measure is not under the control of the State Library and is not reported by local libraries as regularly collected data. Potentially, the other two criteria measures could be used to assess progress in this area—expenditures for youth collection and volumes per capita for youth. Currently, however, these are not collected in the annual report from public libraries. In the survey for this study, the children's librarians were asked to report the expenditures, but only half could report the percentage of the library's total expenditures for materials for the children's collection. In the case of young adult expenditures, less than 30 percent could report a comparable figure. Likewise, less than half could report collection size for children's and about a quarter for young adult collections. Future criteria measures could include these two input measures, but need to be broken up into children's and young adults and collected annually on the annual report from public libraries.

To promote library programs to meet the needs and interests of children and young adults.

Programming for children was widely reported by librarians in the focus groups and is reported annually in the *Florida Library Directory with Statistics*. In the 1993 report, only one library reported absolutely no juvenile programs. The greatest need in programming is reported by librarians and directors for young adults and no comparable program figures are reported to the state on the number of programs for this age group. While FLYP contributes to meeting the previous objective on collections, it is here that it has its greatest impact. The manual and training receives consistently high marks by librarians and directors and was cited as an impetus for programming by librarians in the focus groups. Local LSCA grants were most often linked to programming both inside the library and outreach sites, including daycares, schools, and recreation programs.

CRITERIA: Participant satisfaction with programming is not reported statewide, although local attendance figures suggest that the programming is popular. Librarians in the focus groups also spoke to the success of programming for children and the children reported favorably on the library's programs. Less activity and success in young adult programming was reported in the focus groups by librarians, young adults, parents and educators. The children's program attendance measure is readily available through the public library annual report and is reported by most of the libraries. In 1993 more than 1.7 million children attended more than 50,000 children's programs. Again, no comparable figures are available for young adult programming. Continuing to collect these figures annually is an important benchmark of progress toward this objective, but additional figures for young adults are needed. The evaluation instrument for FLYP also can document the effect of that project and needs to be examined over time by state consultants rather than just as an annual report.

To insure complete accessibility to library service and materials.

LSCA funding for projects under this category were found in each of the last five years. Most often, however, these services were to child care providers. Limited funding in the last three years specifically targeted minority or disadvantaged youth populations, although the services potentially would reach a broad range of youth and their families. Besides this information, little can be added from this study, however, since it did not address this issue directly. Focus group results show that libraries are engaged in outreach services, although meeting this need is a concern of administration and youth services staff. Child care providers are named specifically under this objective. In the survey, daycare providers were the most frequently cited as a cooperating agency by both children's librarians and branch staff.

If the issue of access is narrowly defined as getting a library card, the surveys did provide some information. The majority of libraries offered library cards from birth for children with parental permission (51.5%, n=68). The vast majority required children to be teenagers prior to getting a library without parental permission (95.7%, n=69). Eighteen was the most commonly used age (30.4% of the libraries). No age restrictions were placed on the use of collection for the majority of the libraries (53.0%, n=66). Of those with restrictions, most identified video collections having restricted access (58.1%, n=31).

CRITERIA: None of the criteria can be documented with existing data. These criteria would be extremely difficult to collect as no baseline figures on the "underserved" can be established. Increases in use of the library are documented by use figures in the annual report, but do not specifically explain if the identified populations in this objective make up the increases in use. Periodic assessment of library card practices and restrictions on collection use can continue to measure this aspect of access.

Describing model programs could begin to document progress toward this objective. Locally, figures may be collected on use by service populations (other than age or gender), but are not collected statewide or nationally at this time. Currently, culling evidence of impact from LSCA-funded project reports would be the useful source of information. Statewide, periodic questions on use by certain populations could be tied into the annual report.

Future Planning

The basic LSCA plan for library services to youth has been in place for over a decade, although it has regularly been reviewed and many changes have been made. As such, it has set a context for grants awarded in this category and more generally seems to serve as a long-range plan of service for the State Library of Florida. The current plan needs modification for two major reasons. One is simply that it is out of date and may not reflect current priorities. If LSCA is revamped (and then funded) at the federal level, this could coincide with the need for Florida to revise this segment of the LSCA long-range plan. The state's *Blueprint 2000* is a major influence on that revision. The second reason for revision lies with the criteria used to evaluate progress on the long-range plan. In most cases, the criteria are outside the scope of the State Library of Florida's control and ability to regularly document. These criteria of the LSCA plan will need the most revision, keeping in mind the efficacy of data collection and monitoring when designing the new criteria. Some of the work currently being carried out by the State Library, such as evaluation questionnaires for FLYP and workshops, models this efficient approach and uses information the State Library can regularly and easily collect. Overall, however, little ongoing management information for youth services is collected locally or at the state level.

In order to document impact from LSCA-funded projects, the grant application and report process needs to place a high value on the planning and evaluation components. Use of the federally-supported TELL IT! evaluation model could provide an outline for gathering both monitoring and summary evaluation information. The structure of TELL IT! integrates evaluation throughout the planning process and parallels the sections of a LSCA application. It suggests that librari sing LSCA funds first articulate wnat difference they want to make in their communities and libraries (vision, priorities, and benchmarks) and models progress evaluation (how are we doing) and summative evaluation (what did we accomplish). Given that documenting movement toward the State Library's LSCA objectives is highly dependent on information gathered locally by grantees, it is critical to help local libraries gather and report the necessary information. A planning and evaluation process aids both the local library and the State Library in telling the story of LSCA and library services statewide.

While the LSCA plan is an important document, it raises another concern about the lack of a written long-range plan for the Bureau of Library Development in the youth services area. Without this plan, the LSCA plan serves as the surrogate. This approach may not accurately reflect the needs and priorities within Florida libraries. A clear statement of the role of the Florida State Library in youth services, irrespective of the LSCA priorities would help guide the work of the staff working in youth services and staff dealing with related issues, such as library administration, technology, and training. An integrated Bureau plan would allow youth services issues and activities to be placed in the larger library context, rather than isolating them.

Chapter 4
Public Library Youth Services and *Blueprint 2000*

At the federal level, library programs are being reshaped in light of the National Education Goals. The State of Florida's guide for education reform and accountability, *Blueprint 2000*, parallels these goals. Public libraries, as educational institutions, have a role in helping Florida move toward the vision as expressed in *Blueprint 2000*. In order to place themselves in the state's educational efforts, the public libraries need to show that this is indeed a shared vision and that the public library can demonstrate activities in support of the goals.

In the surveys and focus groups, strong support was given to placing the State Library of Florida in a leadership role. This included articulating the role of public library youth services in the educational arena with both state and local agencies and organizations. Making the library's "case" in light of *Blueprint 2000* was defined as a priority among library administrators and youth services librarians.

As a way of linking the public library and *Blueprint 2000*, the rest of this section uses each of the seven goals to suggest ways the public library contributes to educational efforts in Florida. There are three caveats to consider when reading this section. One, the approach used here does not suggest that library involvement in education is limited to or the sole responsibility of public libraries. Instead, the role of other types of libraries is beyond the scope of this study and, therefore, not included. Second, the emphasis in this study was youth services, so most of the items listed fit in this area, although some other adult and outreach services are included. Finally, the sample activities are not a total reflection of the state-of-the art of public library educational efforts in Florida; these lists are meant as examples, rather than being comprehensive. As the State Library of Florida continues to define its role in *Blueprint 2000*, this discussion may help to serve as an outline for that response.

Goal 1: Readiness to Start School

In this role, communities are asked to collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school. The public library has a clear role in this area, as evidenced by its traditions of programs and collections geared to pre-school children. The public library, as a community-based service, is a readily available partner in preparing children for success in school. Also, because the public library serves all ages, it develops programs that are family-centered and works with parents and other adult caregivers to create an environment where reading and learning can flourish for young children. Preschool programs and collections have as a primary goal the promotion of reading as a major vehicle to becoming ready for school.

The State Library of Florida supports

local efforts to provide service to
local efforts to provide services to
preschoolers, families, and daycare providers. Expertise of the staff is shared in both their consulting and communication roles within the state. As an advocate for the rights of youth, the State Library takes a leadership role in promoting an integrated system of services to help children be ready for school. This includes working with other state agencies and organizations to collaboratively deliver services and solve problems. LSCA grants have funded services targeted to preschoolers in daycare settings as well as enhancing programming and collections for this population.

Public library activities in support of this goal include:

- Preschool story times at the library that expose youth to reading and reading-related activities.
- Family programs that involve the family unit in reading and group activities, including teen parents.
- Intergenerational programming that brings the older adult together with young children.
- Programs offered by the library at early childhood education and child care providers sites, including daycares, Even Start, and Head Start.
- Parenting resource centers, with collections in a variety of formats on child psychology, nutrition, health, parenting skills and issues.
- Informational and support programming for parents and other adult caregivers.
- Children receive library cards to use the library at a young age.
- Access to community resources, including information and personnel, to assist families with educational needs
assist families with educational needs.
- Referral information to appropriate health and social services to assure an optimum learning environment for children.
- New baby packets distributed at the hospital Women, Infants and Children (WIC) centers and well baby clinics to encourage reading and to introduce baby "board books."
- Collections for youth and adult caregivers with a variety of formats, intellectual levels, and age-appropriate content.
- Family literacy programs that seek to break the cycle of illiteracy by engaging families in reading and reading-related activities.
- Deposit collections at places were families receive services, e.g., WIC, social service, and public health centers.
- Partnerships with other community agencies and organizations to collaboratively meet the needs of preschoolers and their families.

Goal 2: Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment

In this goal and goal 3 (student performance), the public library assumes similar roles. To assist school system staff and home schoolers in their efforts to prepare students who are ready to enter the workforce and secondary education, the public library collaborates with schools and families to provide resources and information needed to make this transition. Part of that preparation is the ability to participate fully in the information age. The public library is a key community resource

for information and for access to electronic
for information and for access to electronic
information. A growing number of homeschoolers are present in Florida, and the public library is the origin for the resources for these residents.

Traditionally, the public library is seen as a place that has no graduation, that is, it is a source of learning into adulthood. This goal, with its emphasis on lifelong learning, suggests that the public library becomes a source for learning not only while youth are engaged in formal educational programs, but as they prepare for further education or become active in the workforce. Students who drop out of school are also covered under this goal. Public libraries with literacy programs serve this clientele and support other literacy providers.

The State Library of Florida actively endorses services for young adults in public libraries. In 1994 the State Library produced a manual on developing public library services for young adults and offers training statewide in services to young adults. Consulting expertise in this area, along with cooperative efforts with the Florida Youth Networks, helps local libraries provide quality services to this age group. The State Library models the value of gathering information from client groups in planning and delivering library services. During the summer of 1994 the State Library sponsored focus group interviews with young adults. LSCA grants have funded young adult projects throughout the state. The entire effort of the State Library reinforces the principles of lifelong learning inherent in this goal in order to help local libraries be community centers for learning at all ages.

Public library activities in support of this
goal include:
goal include:

- Informational programs on school-related topics.
- Programs on careers and educational opportunities.
- Access to electronic information sources, especially those related to careers and employment.
- Participation in and assistance with the development of local freenets.
- Collections and electronic information sources to support school assignments and career planning.
- Adult mentors in different career areas.
- Homework centers and assistance, including peer tutoring.
- Opportunities for children and young adults to volunteer and participate in community service.
- Collections and programs that showcase minorities in varied careers.
- Tutoring services for youth, both in school and those participating in alternative programs.
- Collections and facilities to support adult basic education and high school equivalency programs.

Goal 3: Student Performance

Of all the education goals in the *Blueprint 2000,* this has the most detailed performance benchmarks. These benchmarks encompass skills and knowledge, as well as self-esteem, attitudes, and multicultural awareness. In all these areas, the public library incorporates its educational, informational, and recreational roles to help students achieve. The whole library becomes a textbook in support of the vision of high levels of student

performance. As is the case with the

performance. As is the case with the

previous goal, the public library serves as a resource and information center to help the community meet the educational and informational needs of students. It also has a critical motivational role as a source of reading-related leisure, providing non-classroom related reading, music, the arts, and other cultural programming. For homeschoolers, the public library is the school library, filling requests for curriculum and curriculum support materials and information. As a basis for being a community partner in this area, the library seeks and actively cooperates with school teachers, school media specialists, and librarians when designing and delivering services.

The State Library of Florida has formally provided program support for this age group through its Florida Library Youth Program (formerly known as the Summer Library Program). A manual and workshops on programming and collections for this population have been a visible result of the desire to help students maintain and improve the skills and knowledge gained in school. The State Library is a resource on educational, informational, and social issues related to serving children and young adults. The State Library seeks to model collaborative efforts between schools, libraries, and other community groups with state-level communications and agreements. Access to electronic information is a state priority for libraries, and the State Library provides consulting and training support to local public libraries in this area. The State Library assists in the management of the infrastructure necessary to share resources among all the libraries in the state, helping to assure full access to

the state, helping to assure full access to

resources that aid good student performance.

Public library activities in support of this goal include:

- Collections and electronic information sources to support school assignments.
- Homework centers and assistance, including peer tutoring.
- Multi-format collections to meet the interests of children and young adults.
- Access to the information highway for youth of all ages.
- Programs and collections to gain knowledge of and appreciation for diverse cultures.
- Instructional programs and documentation on the use of information sources.
- Tutoring services for youth, both in school and those participating in alternative programs.
- Evening and weekend hours for access to collections and information not possible in the school building.
- Cultural programs, such as those in the performing and literary arts.
- Reading incentive activities to support individual gains in reading and knowledge.
- Summer-centered programming and incentive activities to help maintain individual gains in reading and knowledge during non-school periods.
- Readers' advisory service available to youth and adults who work with youth.
- Collections to promote English as a second language programs.
- Information services accessible to meet the needs of youth with disabilities.
- Collaborative projects between

teachers and the public library, such as assignment alerts, library tours, and orientation.

- YA reading discussion groups.
- Science camps and interactive science displays and learning stations.
- Space for collaborative group work by students.
- Access to computers with wordprocessing programs.
- Quiet areas for studying.
- Displays of student work, e.g., artwork, poetry, science projects, genealogies.
- Opportunities to perform and showcase talents.
- Facilities and resources to aid other youth-oriented groups, e.g., community centers, recreational programs, scouts.
- Volunteer opportunities for youth that help build self-esteem and social and learning skills.

Goal 4: Learning Environment

The need for an environment conducive to learning requires the involvement of many educational stakeholders, including the public library. The library serves as and alternative and additional site for studying and learning. Extended hours and space for studying outside the home are key roles for the library, as well as providing print, audio, and electronic resources to foster a positive learning environment. This is another facet of the public library's use by home schoolers. Participation by stakeholders in decision making is an element of this goal.

The State Library of Florida is a conduit of information relating to environmental issues for local libraries. They regularly collect data to monitor availability of library services statewide. In its communicator role, the State Library shares with libraries successful local practices in creating a good learning environment in the library.

Public library activities in support of this goal include:

- Instructional programs on accessing information both for school and for personal use.
- Access to information sources outside the community.
- Space for collaborative group work by students.
- Quiet areas for studying.
- Hosting visits by school classes.
- Electronic linkages between the school and public library.
- Community freenets.
- Access to the Internet.
- Evening and weekend hours for access to collections and information not possible in the school building.
- Communicating and working collaboratively with school district decision makers on support of school libraries.
- Membership on school district committees and task forces.

Goal 5: School Safety and Environment

This goal has a community-wide focus as it focuses on providing a drug-free environment that also protects students' health, safety, and civil rights. As a learning setting, the public library shares the concern for a safe and comfortable environment. In addition, information about safety, health, and civil rights issues is

accessible in the public library and part of its collection development.

The State Library of Florida serves as a valuable information source for local libraries on health, safety, and civil rights. Collection development aids are produced by State Library staff, and it serves as a central contact for distributing publications in these areas to local libraries. Collaborative efforts of the State Library assist in organizing information and referral networks.

Public library activities in support of this goal include:

- A safe and drug-free location for youth in the community.
- Information and referral for youth, their families, educators, and other youth advocates to local, state, and national resources and services.
- Forum for public discussion of safety and civil rights issues in the community.
- Informational programs for youth and their families in these topics.
- Collections and information on health, safety, and civil rights issues in multiple formats.
- Distribution site for pamphlets and other free information on health, safety, and civil rights topics.
- A reading collection that includes stories of youth dealing with safety, health, and civil rights issues.

Goal 6: Teachers and Staff

Professional development and maintenance of skills of educational staff is the focal point of this goal. The public library is an information source for learning for all ages, so aiding educators in continuing education is an extension of that role. Collections, access to information, site for training, and provider of staff development activities make up the spectrum of activities that help communities meet this goal.

The State Library of Florida has had and will continue to have a key role in the professional development of librarians. It sponsors, funds, and coordinates learning activities in topics that cross over the seven goals of *Blueprint 2000*. The State Library can serve as clearinghouse for librarians and educators of additional relevant training opportunities, not just those designed specifically for teachers or librarians. Managing the resource sharing process among libraries helps to assure that materials needed for professional development are accessible throughout the state.

Public library activities in support of this goal include:

- Access to materials and information for the continued professional development and independent learning of teachers and school staff.
- Participation in school inservice programs to share information on the public library resources and services.
- Program sponsor for learning activities such as use of children's literature in the classroom.
- Site for training and inservice programs, including distance education offerings.
- Access to resources needed in conjunction with distance education courses.
- Instructional programs for home schooling parents.
- In-service programs for adult literacy

tutors and instructors on library services in support of adult and family literacy.

- Enrichment programs for school teachers, staff, and volunteers.
- Access to independent learning activities, such as audio and video instructional tapes, interactive videos, and CD-ROM programs.
- Collections and programs to inform and educate parents about their role as "first teachers."
- Librarians work with local parent-teacher associations to aid understanding of the role of the public library in children's education.
- Provide continuing education opportunities for library staff to enhance their skills as educators, information providers, and community collaborators.

Goal 7: Adult Literacy

The goal for all adult Floridians to be literate is actively supported by the public library community in Florida. The libraries carry out two important roles in adult literacy education, that of provider of literacy instruction and support for other adult literacy providers. The public library also focuses on the prevention side of illiteracy with its family literacy efforts involve adults and children in reading activities. For adults currently involved in adult literacy programs, family literacy efforts have the advantage of building on the learner's motivation to help his or her children. Further, the public library understands the critical role of reading in the home to success in school. Family literacy activities fit in this goal as well as contribute to the first goal of readiness for school.

Linked to literacy is the concept of lifelong learning. The public library has been called the "people's university," which emphasizes its support of all adult independent learners, not just those engaged in adult literacy instruction. In this role, the full range of library services and collections work toward fulfilling the needs of the learner.

The State Library of Florida is a leader nationally in the literacy arena. Coordinator, communicator, consultant, and trainer are among the roles carried out by the State Library in this area. By articulating the place of the public library in this and other educational arenas, the State Library helps promote the library's role as both provider and supporter of adult and family literacy. Staff assist local libraries in seeking federal funding for literacy efforts and have directly funded literacy programs through LSCA Title I. The overall mission of the State Library is to aid the development of public libraries in order to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of Florida's residents. This goal, with its attention to lifelong learning, encompasses the full spectrum of the State Library responsibilities.

Public library activities in support of this goal include:

- Family literacy programming.
- Family reading collections.
- Multi-media activity kits, including books, puppets, music, and learning activities.
- Distribution of books to families.
- Library cards to allow borrowing privileges to patrons of all ages.
- Partner in community-based services for adult and family literacy.

- Instructional services for adults to improve their reading, writing, and computational skills.
- Recruitment and training of adult literacy tutors.
- Adult literacy print and non-print collections.
- Use of electronic information and technology to assist adult learners.
- Information and referral services to educational providers and support services.
- Outreach services including bookmobile.
- Site for family literacy programs, tutoring, and adult basic education and general education classes.

Chapter 5
Recommendations to the State Library

This evaluation study drew on three basic data collection methods: interviews, questionnaires, and review of existing documents. This multiple-method approach provides results from a variety of perspectives. Across these data sources, several key findings emerge.

First, there is strong support for the existing services offered by the State Library of Florida in youth services, including training, the summer (and now year-round) library program, and consulting services. An increased commitment of resources to these existing services is a priority, along with greater attention to the State Library's leadership and advocacy role and communication function. Among the leadership desired is advocacy for the importance of youth services, educating the public and decision makers about the value of public library youth services, seeking additional funding, identifying trends in youth services, and clarifying the role of public libraries in *Blueprint 2000*. Two important sub-themes emerged in this area: the need to make the case for youth services with local boards, governing bodies, and library administrators and establishing stronger relationships with other state-level agencies and organizations interested in youth.

The following recommendations grow out of the information gathering process used during this study. Each has its roots in the ideas and opinions of the librarians and users throughout the state. While not all the recommendations can be implemented immediately, progress on these recommendations can aid local library development in the youth services area. The State Library is not a surrogate for local library services, but carries out activities that lead to quality services throughout Florida public libraries.

General Recommendations on State Library Youth Services

1. Develop a long-range plan for youth services for the Bureau of Library Development that reflects current and future priorities.

Using the LSCA plan (which needs revision) as a basis for the Bureau's efforts in youth services does not establish priorities for ongoing activities of the State Library in youth services. Since only certain activities are funded by LSCA, this does not accurately reflect the full scope of the State Library's efforts in youth services. By placing youth services priorities within the context of other Bureau priorities, youth services activities can become

more integrated. Not all services to youth librarians comes from one consultant. As needs increase in the technology, training, and management areas, consultants throughout the Bureau will serve as resource people in youth services. As such, the youth services component needs to be part of the larger Bureau plan.

2. Increase staff commitment in youth services by at least 20 hours per week.

The desire from the field and the level of current activity at the State Library in youth services consulting strongly suggest an increase in staff directly assigned to youth services. Further, as the National Education Goals continue to shape federal library initiatives, much of that activity will fall into the youth services arena. The need for focused attention is firmly grounded in the information gathered during this study and is further reinforced by the size of the children's and young adult population in Florida. Given these influences, the emphasis of the increased staff time in youth services would be centered in two areas: activities in support of *Blueprint 2000* and young adults. This carries additional budget implications, since there was evidence that the local libraries preferred more consulting time in the field. At a minimum, toll-free telephone access would help promote direct contact with the youth services consultant(s).

In the area of technology, other consulting staff at the State Library need to be appraised of the needs of youth services librarians. Since technology is being addressed by other consulting staff, responsibility to assist in consulting in technology will be more diffuse. The youth services consultant(s) will have the responsibility of communicating these needs internally and linking local librarians to the expertise at the State Library and other libraries and agencies.

3. Begin to integrate support for youth services activities currently funded by LSCA into the State Library's regular operating funds.

LSCA funds currently support FLYP and training activities, as well as special, one-time projects. Use of LSCA funding for special or demonstration projects seems the most appropriate. If FLYP and training are among the priorities of the Bureau of Library Development, they should occur irrespective of what happens with LSCA funding. For FLYP, the essential elements for success need to be identified. It is the funds for these core activities that should be funded by the operating budget first.

Both local libraries and the State Library are limited by the minimal data on youth services. Currently only three juvenile (basically children's) figures are requested: juvenile circulation, number of juvenile programs, and juvenile program attendance. In 1993, the number of programs were reported by all but five libraries and attendance by all but ten libraries. The results are not

as good for juvenile circulation: 21 libraries do not report a figure (*Florida Library Directory with Statistics*, 1993). Improving the reporting on this last figure is an important first step.

Additional information needs to be collected annually. Priority should be given to those that are useful in evaluating the status of youth services in the state and can be used to make the case for youth services with decision makers. Output measures best fit this category. This would mean introducing young adult circulation and program measures first to complement those measures currently being collected for juvenile services. Registered juvenile and young adult borrowers would provide information on the reach of the library's current services. Input figures for both juvenile and young adult services would be a second tier of measures. These include collection size and percent of materials expenditures. In order to make comparisons among libraries, population figures for the juvenile and young adult populations would be reported or generated by the State Library from existing sources for each library.

Some of these figures could be collected periodically, perhaps on a three-year cycle. The input measures would be good candidates for this type of data collection because they are less sensitive to annual changes than usage figures. Additional data, such as questions relating to staffing levels, could also be collected in this manner.

4. Aid the development of guidelines for youth services in public libraries as a companion piece to the public library standards.

In addition to increasing statistical management information, guidelines for youth services help establish benchmarks for improvement for local libraries and for the state as a whole. These guidelines present steps toward a vision for children and young adults in Florida. As a first step, the State Library can help create such a vision and share it with libraries and other agencies and organizations working with youth. From this, a grassroots committee can work on developing guidelines that describe the library role in achieving such a vision. It may be appropriate for this to be a Florida Library Association project similar to the public library standards project currently under way. Clearly the ideas represented in *Blueprint 2000* would aid in this process.

5. In concert with the state Continuing Education Task Force, delineate the role of the State Library in training for youth services.

Overwhelmingly, librarians saw the role of the State Library as trainer in youth services. The State Library was commended for the quality and usefulness of the training in youth services. The demand for this training to continue was definite as was the request for more training. It is recommended that the State Library increase its training opportunities in youth services

to at least two workshops offered in six locations annually. This number would not include the FLYP training sessions. Among the topics to be considered first are young adult services, management, services in support of the Goals 2000, and technology. In designing training, consideration needs to be given to reinforcing earlier training and to repeating some topics to allow for turnover in local libraries.

It is not feasible, however, for the State Library to be the sole provider of continuing education in youth services. Promoting and coordinating training with other state providers is a role for the youth services consultant(s). Partners include, but are not limited to, graduate library schools, youth networks, and consortia. In addition, some libraries offer staff development that may be available to other libraries. A master plan for training in youth services is a needed product to assure that the demand for training in this area is met.

The State Library of Florida also needs to be a clearinghouse for continuing education opportunities in youth services. This includes not only the library activities, but other relevant training opportunities offered by other youth agencies and organizations. This function relates to the State Library's role as collaborator at the state level. Access to this information needs to be facilitated by the youth services consultant(s) and disseminated using a regular communication vehicle for youth services (see recommendation #9).

6. Issue a paper that articulates the public library role in Blueprint 2000.

As has been referenced repeatedly throughout this report, at the federal and state levels the education goals are having a major influence. Public libraries need assistance in articulating their role in meeting these goals. A paper outlining the place of libraries in *Blueprint 2000* will aid local libraries in communicating and collaborating with other educational providers. At the state level, such a document can help further efforts to place library services in an essential role in education endeavors. The paper can be an important element in drawing statewide attention to the role of the public library in local education efforts. The beginnings of such a paper are found in this report.

This paper also could be a first step in articulating an evaluation agenda for the State Library and local libraries in youth services. Just as schools have "accountability" and "public reporting" requirements in relation to *Blueprint 2000*, the libraries need to be able to document their contribution toward these goals. Since all of youth services fit within these goals, evaluation activities linked to the goals will cover the full spectrum of services offered for children and young adults. This evaluation agenda might include adult services since they are also included in some of the goals.

7. Maintain, but do not expand, the current level of effort for the Florida Library Youth Program (FLYP).

Interest in and satisfaction with FLYP is clearly documented in this report. Basically, the program should continue at its current level of support, including graphics, the manual, and training. Within that current level of support, some improvements can be made. The most prevalent is extension of programming to the upper elementary grades. In addition, more attention will be needed to serving diverse populations throughout Florida.

There is evidence, however, that suggests the process used to develop FLYP should be carefully examined for economies. Any effort to streamline the process will help hold the line on the costs and time commitments related to this service. Maintenance of effort, not growth, is the necessary approach to for FLYP at this point in time. It is a valued service, but other priorities emerged during this study that require attention.

8. Provide a direct communication tool for youth services staff in Florida.

Communication already occurs in many ways between the State Library and youth services staff and among Florida libraries. This occurs at training events, during consultation, and in printed documents from the State Library. The *Orange Seed,* the newsletter of the State Library, does contain information for youth services. Unfortunately, this often is not seen by youth services staff at all or not in a timely manner. Further, the need to share what is happening in youth services locally with other libraries suggests more space than is currently committed to youth services in the newsletter. A short, one sheet "news bulletin" format is recommended rather than a full newsletter. This allows for quick production for timely distribution. In addition, savings in production costs can be applied to distributing the bulletin widely among youth services staff, administrators, and other youth agencies and organizations. It should be available electronically for libraries with the necessary equipment and access.

As technology becomes more widely used, it is important for the State Library to make use of electronic communication. For all written communications, copies should be available electronically for those with access. While the number of youth services people with electronic access is small, it is a good time for the youth services consultant(s) to try different uses of the network for communication and project development. Examples of this include discussion groups, gathering information for the newsletter, electronic meetings, and soliciting additional answers to consulting questions from local librarians.

9. Develop agreements and other collaborative activities with state-level agencies and organizations working with youth.

Collaboration emerged as an important theme during this evaluation project. For the State Library, the lowest satisfaction ratings were given for their efforts in promoting local cooperation between libraries and other agencies serving youth. Yet it ranked highly in importance on the questionnaires. This was reinforced in the focus groups. Essentially, the State Library needs to pave the way for local collaboration by developing stronger relationships with state-level agencies and organizations. When possible, these relationships would result in formal memoranda of agreement and cosponsored projects and activities. Shared training is another area for collaborative efforts, as is identification of potential funding sources.

Recommendations Related to the LSCA Long-Range Plan

1. Revise the current LSCA long-range plan.

As discussed in more detail in the chapter on the LSCA plan, a new section on youth services should be developed in light of the National Education Goals. Further, extensive work is needed in detailing progress criteria that are reflective of data accessible to the State Library. This revision effort would be most logically linked to the re-authorization of LSCA currently pending in Congress.

2. Improve the evaluation component of the LSCA application and reporting processes.

Because of the dependence on reports from grantees for documenting much of the progress toward the LSCA objectives, the application and reporting process needs to be examined for ways to strengthen the evaluation component. A variety of approaches can be used to strengthen this component. As discussed earlier, the federally supported TELL IT! process offers one approach to improving evaluation of library services. Training would be a natural outgrowth of any changes in the process or emphases on evaluation. The guidelines for the evaluation section may include required measures, such as use of collections and program participation rates. Requesting clearly stated outcomes as well as multiple evaluation methods can help applicants design a more sophisticated evaluation component.

3. Consolidate State Library youth services requests for funding into an annual omnibus proposal.

Consolidating requests for support of youth services within the State Library of Florida would be done primarily for efficiency. Rather than individual proposals for each area of activity, the consultant staff can concentrate on placing the overall youth services

activities within the framework of the LSCA and Bureau of Library Development plans. Putting all the youth services requests together helps place each activity in the whole context of youth services at the State Library. Additionally, this approach would reduce paperwork and the time needed for preparing each grant and final report.

Made possible through a grant from
Library Services and Construction Act
and administered by the State Library of Florida

Division of Library and Information Services
Florida Department of State
Sandra B. Mortham
Secretary of State

BEST COPY AVAILABLE